

RAZZORCAKE

Issue #12



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East LA Punk Family Tree

Rattlesnakes

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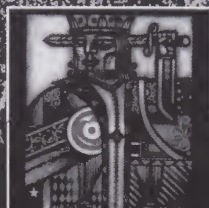
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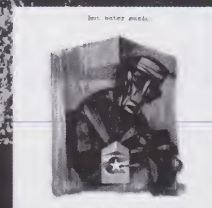
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Razorcake? That feeling I got at the time? Um, the job of putting out a zine to write for? Everyone who's a maintenance worker, now and then, independent voices. A copy of The Brat record, because of the things you love, but where's the things that follow this one for higher-

-Sean

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AGAINST ME!

THE DISCO BEFORE THE BREAKDOWN

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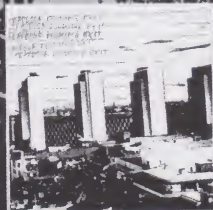
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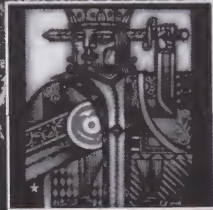
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What do I hope to get out of *Razorcake*? That feeling I got at the SCRM show. What job do I hope it gets me? Um, the job of putting out *Razorcake*. Who would I ultimately like to write for? Everyone who's reading these words, plus an East LA maintenance worker, now and then, and anyone else who wants to hear independent voices.

In the end, it all goes back to my copy of The Brat record, because sure, there's money to be had in selling the things you love, but where's the point in that? I'll trade the 103 pages that follow this one for higher-paying aspirations any day.

-Sean



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Nardwuar

Who Are You?



Nardwuar the Human Serviette versus...

Princess Superstar!

New York City's Princess Superstar has been playing the rap game for quite a few years now, kicking out the "cool beats and rhymes," the way SHE wants to kick out the "cool beats and rhymes." The Princess runs her own label, The Corrupt Conglomerate, and basically does whatever the hell she wants. Princess Superstar's most current release is the ghetto-tech dance anthem "Fuck Me on the Dancefloor."

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Princess: [laughs] Princess Superstar.

Nardwuar: How the hell are you, Princess Superstar?!

Princess: Good, Nardwuar!

Nardwuar: Please tell me the story right off the bat of Matt Dillon farting on your manager's hand!

Princess: [laughs] Okay, great! So, she was in the club in New York, one of these trendy clubs called Spy or something like that, and she literally was like, "Hi, how are you? Nice to meet you," when he met her, and he took her hand and farted on it.

Nardwuar: Welcome to Matt Dillon!

Princess: Yeah! Well, great, and I had wanted her to be my manager right away just 'cause of that story!

Nardwuar: To be able to endure that!

Princess: Yeah!

Nardwuar: You've endured a little trip to Europe, haven't you? A little Bubba Sparxxx thing!?

Princess: [laughs] Yeah! We opened up for Bubba in London.

Nardwuar: Now, there was some toiletry stuff going on there, wasn't there? What about the toilet paper out of his ass? What's going on there, Princess Superstar?!

Princess: [laughs] Oh yeah! Bubba came out for his "Ugly Song" and

pants and there was like a trail of toilet paper. I thought that was great. That was actually the highlight of the whole evening.

Nardwuar: Did you run out and pull it off?

Princess: Uh, no but I saved it.

Nardwuar: Who is Lady Frost?

Princess: [laughs] Lady Frost?!

Nardwuar: Some woman on your internet message board!

Princess: Oh yeah! Oh yeah! No, I don't know. Somebody was going on my message board and writing all these really awful things about me, and then somebody impersonated me and said that I was "going to rip off your vagina" and like all this crazy shit that I would never say and then she got really mad and then I wrote back and I was like, "Look, somebody's impersonating me. Lady Frost, if you've got a problem with me, I don't care. I'm cool with that, you know. Like, I'm here to support music. I don't give a shit. I'm not here to be on anyone's dick..."

Nardwuar: Because I was thinking that you were Lady Frost!

Princess: Oh, like battling myself?!

Nardwuar: Yeah, because you've got some acting training, haven't you?

Princess: Yeah, I sure do. Yeah, yeah.

Nardwuar: How much training did you get and how far did you get along there, Princess Superstar?

Princess: Well, I went to NYU for drama and I graduated. I have a BFA.

Nardwuar: So who are your classmates? Anybody who went on to anything as cool as Princess Superstar?!

Princess: Yeah, as a matter of fact, my roommate in freshman year was Jennifer Charles who's in Lovage with Dan the Automator and she was in Elysian Fields. And also Craig Wedran who was in Shudder

to Think. So, actually, it was funny because a lot of us started up in acting and just went into music.

Nardwuar: Is that how you hooked up with Prince Paul?

Princess: No, a friend and I were so in love with his music that I sort of stalked him and got him to do a track for me. [laughs]

Nardwuar: So, Princess Superstar, you're here in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Tomorrow DJ Jazzy Jeff is in the house!

Princess: Ah, I love it, and as a matter of fact, he's doing something with my record label too. !K7 is going to be distributing his new album so...

Nardwuar: Haven't you collaborated with him?

Princess: I haven't yet but I really want to.

Nardwuar: I thought you maybe had some good Will Smith stories for us!

Princess: [laughs] No! [laughs]

Nardwuar: Now, Princess Superstar, speaking of Canada and collaboration, is it true — a Bryan Adams duet with Princess Superstar?

Princess: You are referring to my second album, *CEO*, where I had message machine tapes from some A&R people going over drums and bass and one of the messages was, "I think you should do a duet with Bryan Adams."

Nardwuar: And a few years later, I think that was a visionary of the record company, enter Sporty Spice, eh?

Princess: [laughs] Visionary!

Nardwuar: Because she did that, didn't she? She did that song with Bryan Adams? You were replaced by a Spice Girl, Princess Superstar!

Princess: My god, it happens all the fucking time.

Nardwuar: So you're in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada — Princess Superstar! You're in Vancouver, British

Columbia, Canada: the 5th Beatle! Canadian connections! You love Canada, don't you?! Your first album came out on a Canadian label. What the hell?!

Princess: I know, it was really weird. It was in '95 and all these majors wanted to sign me. They wanted to change me. They wanted to do this, and then they would promise me this money and never come through and all this. And along this time came this tiny Canadian label out of Windsor and they were like, "Here, we don't have hardly any money but make the record you want to make, and it's cool." And I did, and my first record was called *Strictly Platinum*, and MuchMusic even played my video, so I love Canada.

Nardwuar: And you always remember Canada too! A quote: "Winnipeg to Texas! Easter Egg to Xmas!"

Princess: Yay! My father was born in Winnipeg!

Nardwuar: No way!

Princess: Way!

Nardwuar: I never knew you had some Canadian connections, like real Canadian connections!

Princess: Blood! Blood!

Nardwuar: And you also have props out to the "Safety Dance" in one of your rhymes, Princess Superstar!

Princess: I sure do, and as a matter of fact, I DJ too, and I always play "Tom Sawyer"!

Nardwuar: Baboom!

Princess: Yeah!

Nardwuar: Of Rush!

Princess: Ha haa!

Nardwuar: Rush is an interesting artist. Tell me about Kid'n'Play, Princess Superstar!

Princess: Well, I really like Kid'n'Play, specifically the hairdos. I have a line in "Wet Wet Wet" where I say, "Foreplay? Hmm. I can make your cock go higher than the hair on Kid'n'Play."

Nardwuar: That is amazing!

Princess: Thanks.

Nardwuar: Now, speaking of "c star star K" etc., Jarvis Cocker!

Princess: Yes! [laughs] Yes, Jarvis is amazing. I mean, they are big supporters of what I do. They brought me over to London and...

Nardwuar: And had you play a prison, wasn't that nice?

Princess: Yes! It was really amazing, though. They do these weird parties called "Desperate" and the premise is we're all a little bit too old to be partying so we're sort of desperate. So I've DJ'd and I've performed live with him, and they're great. They're really nice.

Nardwuar: That was in the UK where you are blowing huge!

Princess: Huge.

Nardwuar: Huge, Princess Superstar! Why now? Why? How many records has it taken?

Princess: [laughs] Four. It's cool, man. You know what? It's like I never sold out to a major label. I sort of developed my own thing over the years. And maybe if I had signed earlier I would have been bigger earlier, but I don't care. I've developed into the artist I am now, and that was really important to me, and now finally everyone is catching up to me. People in the UK are super open to new kinds of music — not in America; it's very difficult because you have to be boxed in like this or like that. But in the UK it's all open. I mean, even Jimi Hendrix in the day couldn't get a record deal. He had to go to the UK.

Nardwuar: And he was from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada — well, he played a few gigs here at the Smilin' Buddha Cabaret! And you're here in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Princess Superstar! Now, Princess Superstar, your stage act has been described as "WWF meets softcore porn"!

Princess: [laughs] Wow! [laughs]

Nardwuar: I've been thinking, you've thrown out some props to softcore porn — and hardcore pornography as well — with your allusion of *On Golden...*

Princess: ...Blonde.

Nardwuar: That was a great porno, wasn't it?

Princess: [laughs] I actually didn't see it.

Nardwuar: How about this one? *21...*

Princess: Uhhh...

Nardwuar: *21 Hump...*

Princess: *21 Hump...*

Nardwuar: *21 Hump Street!*

Princess: Aaaaah!

Nardwuar: That was another one — a potential song lyric there, Princess Superstar.

Princess: Okay, I will have to remember that for the next song.

Nardwuar: I think people should be aware, though: you have been in *Playgirl* and *Business Week*!

Princess: [laughs] I know, and I kept my clothes on, too!

Nardwuar: What a combination!

Princess: And I've been in *Playboy* too, but not naked. And *Business Week* was with my label. That was like so amazing because I brought that right home to my dad as opposed to *Playboy*.

Nardwuar: So what happened to the label? It's kind of gone....

Princess: No, no, no, it's not. It's not. It's

called the Corrupt Conglomerate and I licensed it to IK7 so it is still a licensing deal with my label. I mean, they're doing all the work but I'm still going to be working on signing other artists and that.

Nardwuar: You got juice, Princess Superstar, don't you?!

Princess: Yeah!

Nardwuar: In the streets of New York, "juice" means...

Princess: [laughs] Princess Superstar!

Nardwuar: Power!

Princess: [laughs]

Nardwuar: Now, Princess Superstar, I am amazed by your powers, like the power you have to make that guy write a thesis and turn that thesis into a video game for you?!

Princess: Oh yeah, yeah. He's amazing and he used to write also for a lot of Canadian magazines. He used to live in Montreal, too.

Nardwuar: Princess Superstar, what turns you on? I heard — what do you enjoy? Mod suits. You like mod suits, don't you?

Princess: Yeah, yeah, I like mod suits, but what really turns me on is a brilliant sense of humor and somebody who is really smart and...

Nardwuar: And mod suits!

Princess: And mod suits!

Nardwuar: How about your own love? Are you single now, Princess Superstar, or are you still dating through the internet? Didn't you have an internet romance?

Princess: [laughs] Okay, well I had a short-lived IM romance, it's true, but I...

Nardwuar: What was it like when you first met the other fellow?

Princess: Well, no, he was all right. It wasn't like he was some sort of hideous creature or something like that, but it was just — I leave all the time.

Nardwuar: How was his, uh, hard drive?

Princess: I wouldn't know! [laughs]

Nardwuar: Fat Boys! Fat Boys!

Princess: Uh, the Fat Boys are back. Yeah, they deserve some props, don't they? Give some props to the Fat Boys! Absolutely.

Nardwuar: Princess Superstar, Fat Boys, gyms, working out. There is that great story of you and Mike D, you know, at the gym. Have you met anybody else at the gym, or has anybody else been listening to Princess Superstar and you've run into them?!

Princess: If you listen to my whole discography you will see there are a myriad influences and...

Nardwuar: And one of those influences is asses.

You love asses, don't you, Princess Superstar?!

Princess: [laughs] I do!

Because you work out quite a bit, don't you, Princess Superstaaaaaa!

Princess: Yeah. Yeah. I do work out when I can. I'm trying to think if I met anyone else famous at the gym.... No. I know Ben Stiller is a member of my gym but I never saw him.

Nardwuar: What gym were you going to and what have you observed at the gym?

Princess: Um, I go to Crunch and...

Nardwuar: A crunch?!

Princess: Yeah, Crunch, and they're always



Nardwuar the Human Serviette

playing the worst music — that's what I've observed — like really bad techno trance music and I just put on my earphones and I'm like, "Blech."

Nardwuar: Mike D of the Beastie Boys you saw at the gym. Ad Rock of the Beastie Boys lives in New York too, doesn't he?

Princess: Yeah.

Nardwuar: Doesn't he live with Kathleen Hanna of Le Tigre?

Princess: Yeah, I'm not sure...

Nardwuar: Do you ever see her around? Because I'm always fascinated by that, you know, Le Tigre and Beastie Boys together but not really! Do you ever see them together?

Princess: No, I haven't. You know, I haven't even been in New York for ages either because I'm touring all the time so I kind of miss it.

Nardwuar: Princess Superstar, "I got more rhymes than John's got..."

Princess: Peel Sessions!

Nardwuar: I love it! Your indie roots popping up! You're an indie rocker at heart, aren't you, Princess Superstar?!

Princess: I totally am, and I am very, very impressed with you. You're calling up all these old school references and stuff. You've done your homework.

Nardwuar: You were on Teen Beat Records! Teen Beat! Teen Beat! You were a Teen Beater! You were a Teen Beater, Princess Superstar! Mark Robinson, Teen Beat!

Princess: Yeah, well, I used to play guitar in a band called the Gamma Rays, an all girl band, and also Mark Robinson was also the one who taught me how to set up a label.

Nardwuar: Which ended up being...

Princess: The Corrupt Conglomerate.

Nardwuar: And we're here in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada with Princess....

Princess: Superstar.

Nardwuar: Princess Superstaaaaaaa! Now, speaking of indie rock, Fugazi, you sampled Fugazi! Are you one of the first people to sample Fugazi in kind of like the big time game?

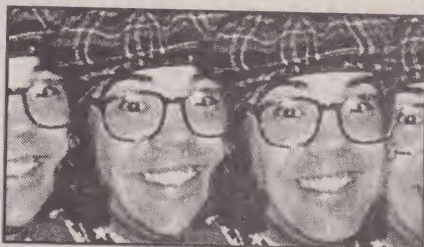
Princess: Yeah, well, I sampled Fugazi on my first record so I'm not sure how many people heard that but they are amazing! And I love their work ethic and also they are a big inspiration of why I never signed to a major initially so...

Nardwuar: When you first started out, Princess Superstar, did you have another name? Were you always Princess Superstar? Weren't you Creem or something?

Creem?!

Princess: [laughs]

Well, no, but that's a really good story. What happened was that once I went into a manager's office in the early days and this guy was like, "We're going to call you Creem." And you're going to be



like, "I ain't from the ghetto and I ain't trying to go to the ghetto. I am Creem, motherfucker." And like wear furs and all this shit, and I was like, "Dude, that's not really me." [laughs] And he was like, "You're not going to make any money in this business unless you do it that way." And I'm like, "All right then." And of course I didn't make any money! [laughs] Now I am!

Nardwuar: Enter Princess Superstar!

Princess: Yeah, so I was always called Princess Superstar, yeah.

Nardwuar: Princess Superstar, what's the history of pioneering women rappers? I mean, Blondie! Blondie!

Princess: Yeah, I mean Blondie is just amazing. As is Roxanne Shanté. And Queen Latifah.

Nardwuar: What about Bitches With Problems?

Princess: [laughs] Bitches With Problems?

Nardwuar: Hos With Attitude!

Princess: Yeah!

Nardwuar: Da Brat!

Princess: Yeah, we love it all.

Nardwuar: The Yeastie Girls, Princess Superstar?!

Princess: I heard of them.

Nardwuar: Millie Jackson. Ever heard of her?

Princess: Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Nardwuar: Going way back in the rap game.

Princess: That's way back.

Nardwuar: Trina, the Baddest...

Princess: The Baddest Bitch!

Nardwuar: Have you ever met Trina at all?

Princess: No, but she's got a really funny song with Trick Daddy that I like a lot.

Nardwuar: Gangsta...

Princess: Boo!

Nardwuar: Whut...

Princess: Whut!

Nardwuar: Whut Whut! That's another great rapper, isn't it? Jean!

Princess: MC Jean Grae is so amazing! Everyone's got to get with the new song she did with Mr. Len, "Taco Day." Uh, amazing.

Nardwuar: Princess Superstar,

Peaches, Canadian kind-of rapper — I was once told by Courtney Love never to compare women groups to women groups, but Peaches, Princess Superstar, ever done any gigs with her?

Princess: Um, no, but I know Peaches. She used to come to my shows back in the day in like '96 when I first started coming to Canada. She was a fan, and so was Gonzales, and they're great.

Nardwuar: What about in England? Have you ever got any comparisons to Peaches at all?

Princess: No, I get compared to Eminem constantly.

Nardwuar: Which you want to downplay right now!

Princess: [laughs] You know, he's a great lyricist but he's not what I'm about. If you listen to my whole discography you will see there are a myriad influences and...

Nardwuar: And one of those influences is asses. You love asses, don't you, Princess Superstar?!

Princess: [laughs] I do!

Nardwuar: Kool Keith's ass!

Princess: Yeah! [laughs]

Nardwuar: Now tell me about Kool Keith. You know him pretty well, don't you, Princess Superstar?

Princess: Yeah. Yeah.

Nardwuar: Is it true he likes to pleasure himself in the bleachers of Yankee Stadium or in fitting rooms at Macy's?

Princess: You know, I really don't get that at all. I mean, he came to the studio and he was totally professional. He's great. I think that a lot of that is just people going off on their own imaginations.

Nardwuar: But he does have a porno company, doesn't he?

Princess: Yeah, he does. Yeah.

Nardwuar: And have you investigated that at all, Princess Superstar?

Princess: No. [laughs]

Nardwuar: But about your ambitions? Beyond doing music — I mean, Kool Keith has a porno company. You and ass enhancers? You want to get on the ass bandwagon, don't you?

Princess: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. We were going to market a line of ass enhancers to make your buttocks bigger. We might do that. Um, yeah, man, I'm writing a hip-hop musical right now so I don't know where that's going to go. All I know is that the first song I am writing is for Ghostface Killa and Dolly Parton to collaborate on together with me!

Nardwuar: Well, that's amazing!

Princess: Yeah, so I hope they do it but...

Nardwuar: You don't know either

of them, do you?

Princess: No, but, you know, I've learned it's pretty easy to find who you want to find.

Nardwuar: Who has the best ass, do you think, Princess Superstar?

Princess: [laughs] Oh my god, well, you know, Ghostface Killer does have a nice ass. [laughs]

Nardwuar: You like Microsoft Word, don't you? Don't you namecheck Microsoft Word, Princess Superstar?

Princess: I sure do, because I used to be a secretary back in the day and so, yeah, Microsoft Word is a great product.

Nardwuar: How about Bill Gates's ass? How is Bill Gates's ass, Princess Superstar?

Princess: Oh, no, no. I don't think I want to go there but I do namecheck also Steve Case, who owns AOL.

Nardwuar: Woah! Which you've dumped, right?!

Princess: [laughs] Yeah!

Nardwuar: Princess Superstar. You live in New York? I mean, do you experience everything? Are you down with it? I mean, everything happens in New York. I know you haven't been there a lot but come on, there must have been some wild parties? Are you down with the scene? How do they accept you?

Princess: Yeah, no, I do go to a lot of parties in New York when I'm there. It's great. I mean, it's like everything is there. You're totally right. You can go in the hip-hop scene, or you can go in the indie rock scene. You can go wherever you want and that's what I love, you know, that is what has inspired me as an artist.

Nardwuar: But what parties have you been invited to rapwise? What cool rap parties? I'm just imagining! Have you visited like ODB now that he's in rehab or anything?!

Princess: No, I've been fortunate for that, but I have been to Missy Elliott's record release party and stuff like that.

Nardwuar: [soundcheck noises] Oh wow, I guess you gotta go soundcheck. now... Princess Superstar, the half Canadian MC!

Princess: [laughs] I'm American, but yeah honorary Canadian.

Nardwuar: Well, thank you very much, Princess Superstar, keep on rockin' in the free world, and doot doola doot doo...

Princess: Doot doot!

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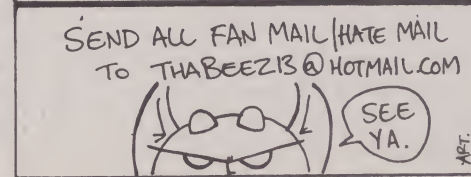
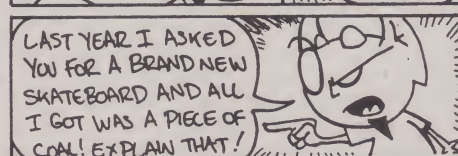
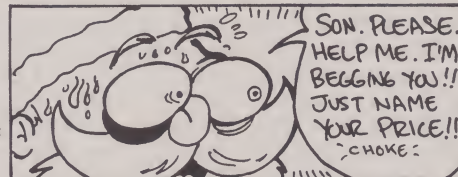
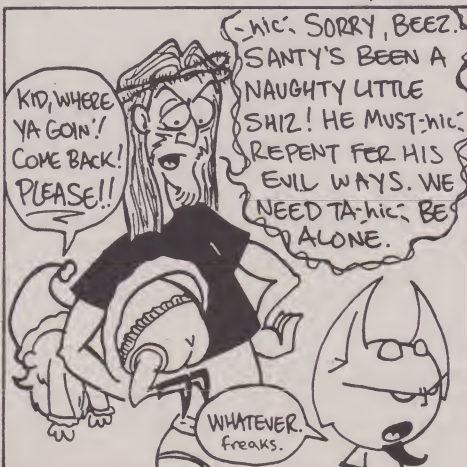
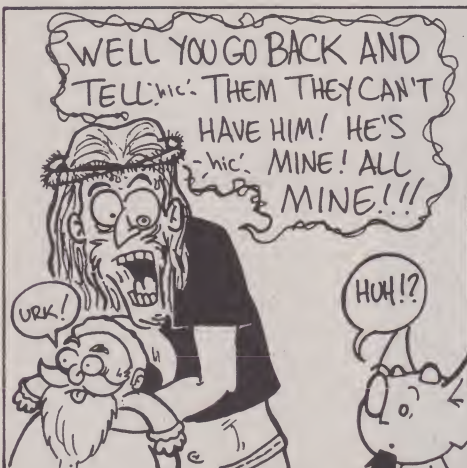
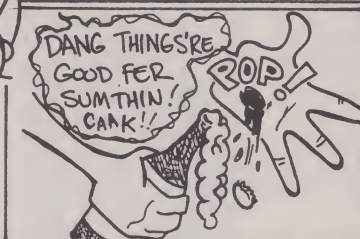
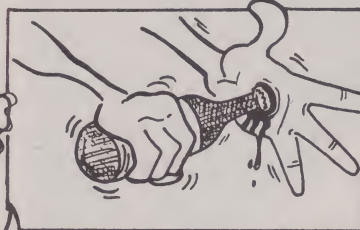
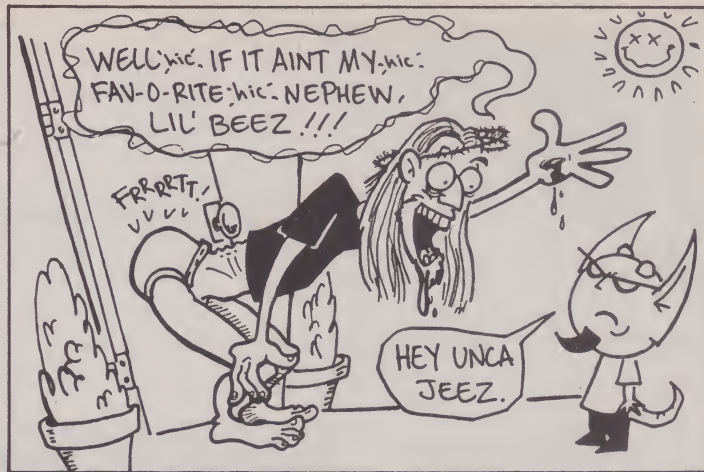
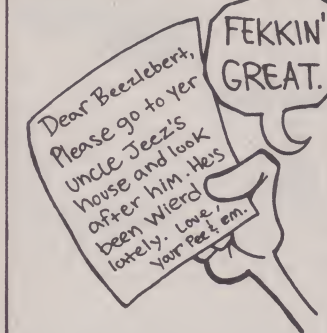
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RAZORCAKE
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12/02





Ayn Imperato

94103



A good song is a good goddamn song. And worth a fist.

TWENTY FISTS

The small coasts town of Cayucos restored my faith in rock and roll. The people in that town don't just love music — they explode with it.

The punk band I'm in, The Tramps, played down there at the local bar one weekend and we really weren't expecting much but a laid back time away from the hectic city of San Francisco where we live. But when we rolled into town at midnight, Friday, there was already a party screaming to life. Beer cans were sailing from the beach house balcony where we were staying, as we pulled up to unload our equipment.

Upstairs, people were running around like crazy, drinking whiskey straight out of the bottle, with punk and metal music blaring from four foot, skater-sticker-covered speakers. One guy was staggering around, covered with blue magic-markered slogans: "I like ass" on one arm and a picture of a giant penis on the other. I thought this sort of thing only happened when you passed out drunk at a party — yet he was still coherent when he begged me to write something else on his last square inch of untouched flesh. Another guy was already passed out on the couch with his mouth hanging open, hugging a giant stuffed fish. It was barely twelve.

Hanging out a bit longer, I found out that a bunch of these guys were seasonal firefighters, finished with work for several months after a long, brutal season. Their job, working for the forestry department, is an extremely dangerous one. They are dropped off into the middle of a burning forest to cut a break in the trees, which stops the fire from progressing further. The job requires working extreme manual labor — cutting



sometimes for periods of forty-eight hours at a time — for approximately seven month stretches in order to pull off the monumental task. At the end of the day they are covered in soot, knowing that tomorrow the winds could change suddenly while they're working, causing the fire to jump across the fire break, which could possibly burn them alive. All this to save other people's lives and the remaining forests. You can't blame them for wanting to cut loose — *real* loose — on their months off.

The Cayucos Tavern is a hum-

ble but jumping little place, and is the only bar in town. Outside, there's a cowboy mural welcoming you. Inside, there are pictures of topless girls in furry chaps painted on the walls. At the bar, twenty-one-year-olds drink side by side with sixty-one-year-olds in their matching Cayucos Tavern sweatshirts. Old and young coming together over furry chaps and beer.

Saturday night we played at The Tavern with two other local bands, Pat Riot and Broadzilla. We set up our equipment on the long, narrow stage, which had a

strange giant pole set up right in the middle. It was a new challenge, setting up our drums, guitar and bass amp lengthwise, instead of having the standard 3-D box to work with. The troublesome pole only served to separate us more. But being the Tetris masters that we are, we managed to find positions for our equipment where you could still hear everything okay, even if there wasn't much room to, say, move around. But the PA was good and loud and that's all we really needed to make it work.

As we kicked into playing, the smallish crowd exploded. I looked up to see twenty fists raised in the air. No one cared what we wore or that our decrepit amps were several decades old, that our stuff was set up in a row, or seemingly that I was even a girl. The fists just flew. People sang along to some of our songs — they knew the words even though our CD hadn't been released yet. Someone had made copies of the demo we sent earlier and traded them with their friends. I had forgotten what that was like — I was from a small town too. But I had forgotten.

I was now used to the big city show experience. In San Francisco, the most you can expect from a crowd in a bar is a few stoic nods, along with a few wild dancers who are, in fact, usually people visiting from out of town. Because to raise a fist in San Francisco might be to admit to live and breathe and feel and fight and die. One thing's for sure, people in small towns still do.

Playing on that tiny stage in that tiny town to a crowd of music die-hards made me remember what it's all about. Standing up there, it wasn't about selling copies of our CD or stroking our egos on a lifted, gigantor stage. It was about those twenty fists, raised to the pure ecstasy of rock and roll.

After the show, there was an after party at the same house as before. I got too drunk too fast to

remember the two-drink maximum, but somehow knew it wouldn't apply here anyway. The life of the party was an underage drunk guy in a leather jacket and cowboy hat who had peed himself and was doing the Russian Hat dance in the middle of the living room in his wet, stained jeans. This was followed by a flurry of empty beer cans, which everyone pelted him with. And there were a lot of empty cans at this point. He kept dancing while being pummeled with aluminum cans, stopping only momentarily to motion us with his hands — he was beyond speech — to keep the cans coming.

And those fists continued to fly. Literally. At one point in the night, five people were dog piled on the couch, punching each other simultaneously. It started out as a joke and segued into a broken nose. The guy with the busted schnoz staggered around the party for the rest of the night, seemingly oblivious, with blood covering his white t-shirt.

The next day, we woke up at noon. We were coated in beer but, thankfully, not blood. We stopped by the tavern later that afternoon to say goodbye and were sucked back inside. Although the inside of the bar was slightly brighter with the sun shining in and we physically felt and looked a hell of a lot worse than when we arrived, it was as though the party had never really stopped. Inside, our eyes slowly adjusted to the dark. A bunch of people from the night before were sitting around with a few pitchers and pints, attempting to squash their hangovers.

Johnny Cash was blaring from the jukebox. How could we leave? Just one more drink. Or six.

The guys ordered martinis. As a joke. They slugged them, holding the small glasses in their big callused fingers, complaining about how terrible they tasted. Then they filled the tiny, empty glasses up with beer and drank them with their pinkies out. I liked these guys. These firefighter, rock and roll guys.

And the fists were still rising — even in the mid-afternoon — when a good song came on the jukebox. Punk, metal, country. Even Neil Diamond got a fist. Anyone who can equate AC/DC with Neil Diamond understands rock and roll in my book. A good song is a good goddamn song. And worth a fist.

Outside the sun slowly lowered and flattened itself out, as though it was drunk too. The theme from the Dukes of Hazzard blared out and there was a moment of silence, a dead calm of clinking glasses in the distance and murmured conversation. One of the larger guys stood up on his stool, clutched the beer pitcher with both hands and raised it to the ceiling, screaming, "Yeaaaaaaahhhh!" Everyone raised their glasses towards the pitcher in the air. *Dukes of Hazzard* episodes raced through our heads, under the crown of twenty shining beer glasses, held in twenty fists. And for a moment that was all that mattered in that tiny punk rock town.

-Ayn



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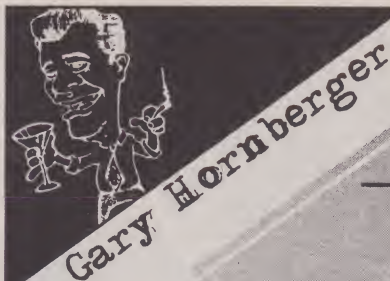
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Squeeze My Horn

Let me just say that a \$1.99 can buy just enough toilet paper to clean up all the crap hidden in between the pages of this excuse for a comic.

Hi folks, it's the holiday season and things are spinning out of control just nicely. Halloween was a giant bust. My dogs scared away the first bunch of kids and only two other groups showed up after that. Halloween was one of my favorite holidays and now it's just a crappy let down. Hell, even the costumes suck. We used to go to great lengths to have cool costumes. I never thought I would say it, but I'm getting more bent and cynical as I grow old. Just the other day, I questioned a co-worker as to why she would want to bring a child into this world. All around us the world gets darker. There's a powder keg in the middle east just waiting for that guy who someone other than myself voted into presidency to blow up. That same character is being allowed to take our civil liberties away from us. It took how many men to create this government and it seems just one is trying to become king.

My real problem lies in the work force. I found a small booklet in the back seat of my truck that I signed my life away for. It is my work's "code of business conduct." In short, it vaguely states what I should do at work. Now, before I climb on my soapbox, let me set some groundwork. I, Gary Hornberger, have a degree from Long Beach State in Engineering Technology, yet I work in a grocery store. Which one? I cannot say because my job tells me I will get in trouble if I do. I know it's my own damn fault that I'm still there and I come home every day and beat myself up for it but that's my problem. My feeling is that a job is something you go to do the best you can, clock out, and leave it there. This is a pipe dream! I've had several jobs and they all wanted to own me, even when I got home. So, in my current employment, they decided to make a department of "Ethics and Compliance," something like what the leader of the U.S. did with Homeland Security. This is a company that, to this day, is still trying to dodge a class action suit for making workers work off the clock. This is a company that makes billions, according to the newsletter, and claims it's not making enough and that's why stocks are down. This is a company that can afford to give salaries to managers in the triple digit range but complains that the grunts are bleeding them dry (that would be us, the union types). I ask, what kind of ethics can they ask me to follow? My manager, the guy making the big bucks who tells me he's god and could have any of us fired? You mean those kinds of ethics?

It's easy to say just get a new job, but we fall into spaces — like good pay, good hours, or proximity to home — things that can hold one back from the unknown. In a nutshell,

why is it that employment makes us give up some of the rights we are granted by being an American? Why is it that in order to get a paycheck I have to sell my soul? It is well known that the separation in wealth in this country is widening with the lower income becoming the greater in number. What does this say about business in this country? I just don't understand why we want our kids to go through this. When I was young, I don't remember seeing the world this way. Why is it now that I regret getting up in the morning, and why do I wish I could just make it to retirement? I'll tell you why — because things are hitting the boiling point and when the lid comes off there's not going to be much left. So, with that said, I will step off my box and slink off to bed and wish you all good night hopes that you had safe holidays.

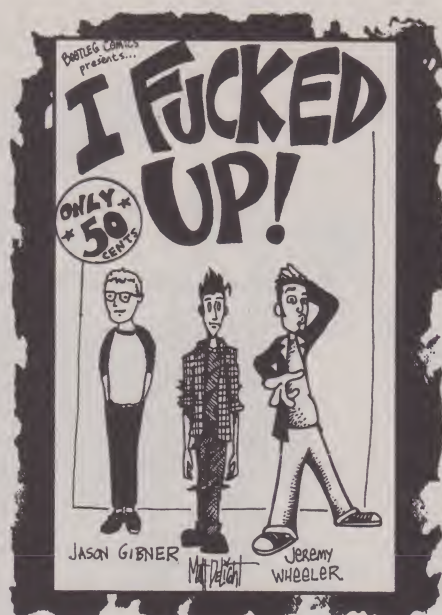
because I don't know anyone who could make sense of this book. I really can't find any redeeming qualities in this book. Perhaps if it had a story, something, anything to follow and the art wasn't so distorted I could give a kind word. Rapping fantasy animals are just too far out there. If you're daring with your money, please, please buy the X-men!

GARISH ZOW COMICS #2
\$8

I never understand why comics that are well put together have no price tag. This collection of stories is wonderful. It's visually spectacular and, at the same time, thought-provoking. From the very first story "Trail of Waste" to "The Helpful Spirit," I was knee-deep in enjoyment. "Trail of Waste" is about this giant head that is busy laying waste to a river and causing havoc to the life forms that use it. The main character is a surveyor, who happens upon a small herd of deer or antelope, who plead with him to try to stop the giant. When the giant tells him to "get the hell out of my way," the surveyor and the deer devise a way to spin the giant around and make him eat his own waste. I wish I could do that to some of the companies I've worked for. Another good story is the "Witch's Mark." When I was a kid, we read comics like *Creepy* — you know the ones that dealt with the spirit world. This story is right on that tip. It's about these monks who decide to go on a witch hunt because the people of the town are losing interest in religion. The monks go out and string up an old women who lives alone in the woods. Bluntly, these monks tell her why they're doing it and she tells them that she's not a witch but she's going to put a curse on them anyway. Guess what happens. The curse works and all the monks involved basically go mad. Pretty cool, huh? Of course, there are many more good stories packed into this little gem, but I'm not about to open the whole goodie bag. Get your own candy, damn you. These guys even give two extra mini comics: one in the front cover and one in the back cover. Hopefully these guys will get a contract with a store so consumers can pick up future copies, but for right now just drop them a line. If you like thought-invoking stories packed tight, then get your mitts on this one. (Hidden Agenda Press, 647 N. Santa Cruz Ave, St. E Los Gatos, CA 95030; <hiddenagenda-press@hotmail.com>)

I FUCKED UP
\$.50 U.S.

Any comic that sells for fifty cents is okay with me. I don't know what it is this time with comics about guys and relationships, but here's



BATTLEBEASTS AND BATTLERAPS
\$1.99 U.S.

Let me just say that a \$1.99 can buy just enough toilet paper to clean up all the crap hidden in between the pages of this excuse for a comic. All the dialog is in rap, which makes it totally impossible to follow any story line — if there was one. The characters are all escapees from a zoo; there's a power penguin, a shark that bursts out of cool aid, some sort of cat, a dragon, and too many more misfits that really would be meaningless to mention. What was going on in this guy's head must have been drug-induced

for members only. If you're not a member, you receive a visit from Mr. Click, who basically cuts you up with a switchblade. It seems that this guy's girlfriend gets her hands on the book and she and her friends start reading things aloud when, of course, who should show up? You got it. Mr. Click. He ends up killing the whole lot of them and there ends the story. Now that I think of it, this wasn't much of a story, either. It's pretty predictable, so maybe I'll just leave this one alone and see if anyone elsezzzzzzzzzzzzzzzz zzzz zzzzzzzzzzzzzzz. Sorry, did I fall asleep? (Rubber Suit Comix, PO Box 1514, Royal Oak, MI 48068)



From the cover art I was tossing a coin, but I've got to say this is a cool story. Visually and verbally this is a great book. It's a story about the little guy against the big guy, with a whole lot of fantasy and magic thrown in. It's the story of an old man who makes toys on a far-off island, Market Island. It is much different than the island on which he lives, which is just a series of towering buildings. The poor live on the lower levels where flooding is common. On the highest levels, where the governing body live, the water has no effect. The governing

body, of course, wants Market Island for a parking lot so they dispense an inspector to check permits. When he informs them that the government is kicking them out, a riot breaks out. At this time, the old toy maker is just coming to work and one of the robot sentries strikes and blinds him. In his search for medical help, a child takes him to a healer where he is given the bandages of life which enable him to a new life and life to three toys he creates. Together, they travel to confront the government. It is in the office of the minister of division that a battle ensues with the security robot capturing the toy maker. When they unravel his bandages, they find nothing. But, that night the tide waters mysteriously drown the minister of division. Afterwards, the government gives up on Market Island. All are left to wonder, "Was it prophecy or coincidence?" This is one of those stories that give us working stiffs the will to go on because someone out there knows our problems. I must say this book has the flavor of Suess's *The Lorax* in it with its sense of something powerful in meaning in a light art form. (Bruce Orr, 1601, S. 8th Street, 3rd Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19148; <bruce@immersionpress.com>)

Gary Hornberger

#1, \$??

RADISKULL & DEVIL DOLL
\$2.95 U.S., \$4.70 Can.

Hell has fury and it comes in the form of Radiskull, a character straight off of a Suicidal Tendencies album. He's a floating skull with a bandana and spiked hair and he hangs out with his best pal, Devil Doll, who is a grade school demon. Together they like to create havoc. First off, Radiskull gets hit by an SUV, which he proceeds to chase down unsuccessfully. Then he gets pissed at TV and smashes that up. Things really get going when Radiskull fills in for Devil Doll at the Steamin' Weenie while the Doll visits his girl in heaven. Working in fast food is just not right for Radiskull because he basically has the speech pattern of Ringo Starr in the movie *Caveman*. So, long story short, he ends up tearing the place apart. I picked this one in the store because my nephew told me that this was on cable and he said it was pretty good. Maybe it's the medium that's the problem. I found it to be on the kiddie side with moments of greatness. For instance, there's a reference to a mullet hairstyle that the manager of Steamin' Weenie has that got me to chuckle. Now, to tell the truth, I'm not sure where this is being marketed to. It does have strong possibilities, so look for this one. When you go to the store, thumb through it first and see if anything catches your eye. (www.radiskull.com)

\$1.50 U.S.

Where do I start? I guess with *Mr. Click*, because *A Charmed Life* is just one of those social commentary comics about the lows of drinking. Well, that takes care of that story. So, *Mr. Click*, the story is about a college kid who joins a society of secrets. Actually, it's two guys who do only god knows, but they are going to train him in whatever it is they do, and it requires reading from their special book. The book is filled with forbidden knowledge that is

Well, I'm gonna have to say the name is a little misleading. I wouldn't exactly call the stories titillating, perhaps because the two tales are opposite of each other. One's futuristic and the other is a somewhat modern-day middle east. The first tale is about this guy who gets hit by a car so hard that it knocks his protons ahead of his electrons. No, really! Look, it says so right here in the pages in black and white. The doctor who sees him wants to put him through a machine that will set everything back in line, but for some unknown reason after the therapy, this guy kills two muggers who attack him. Then this guy and his friends decide to sue the driver who hit him, but down at the police station, no police report found. This is where we're left hanging to buy the next issue. Pretty soap opera of them, right? The next tale is from Bart Simpson's "damned if you do, damned if you don't" file. It's about this kid whose father tells him to watch his flock of sheep. You know where this is going. Yes, big wolf eats sheep, boy gets in trouble, goes back out, kills wolf, and gets in trouble for that, too. I told you it wasn't titillating. Alright, it's chancy. You might like it or it may put you to sleep. I'm just letting you know before you get this one. (keep-ithiphop@hotmail.com)





Shark Bait

...it is more socially acceptable for a boy to play with guns than to play with dolls... isn't it?

Guns, Dolls, Michael & Me

Sean wanted to see the new Michael Moore movie, *Bowling for Columbine*. He told me on Monday and Tuesday and Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. Of course I only heard him on Saturday, when I was sitting at the computer, playing on the internet and bopping to Japanese punk rock.

"The movie starts at 4:15," Sean said. "If we leave in twenty minutes, we can make it."

"Sure," I said. I clicked onto eBay. I already had it bookmarked in Favorites.

"I mean it," Sean said. "You should start getting ready."

"In a minute," I said. I typed in a search for Sea Wees. My most recently acquired Sea Wee doll from eBay dated back to last year, and I was pretty close to done with that obsessive doll-collecting phase. But I liked to see who was fool enough to bid as high as I used to.

"I'm leaving in exactly twenty minutes," Sean told me.

"Okay," I said. I returned to Favorites and clicked open the folder that I'd labeled *Blythe*!

Blythe is a doll that I came across recently and accidentally. I'd been browsing through kick-ass artist Lisa Petrucci's website, checking out her paintings of the Kute and Karnal, wanting very badly to own the ones of Liddle Kiddle dolls portrayed as bad girls and pin-up girls. One of the links on Lisa's site took me to Gina Garan's Blythe doll website. Gina Garan is a New York-based photographer who found Blythe by chance a few years ago. Blythe was originally released in 1972 and was available for only about a year. When you pulled a cord attached to the back of her head, her eyes changed from pink to green to orange to blue. Every time you pulled the cord, Blythe's eyes would click to a different color. Her head was abnormally out of proportion to the rest of her body, to accommodate those rotating eyeballs. Gina took Blythe home with her and started using the doll as a model in her photographs. In 2000, a collection of Gina's photos were published in a book called *This is Blythe*. After the book's release, people suddenly wanted to be Blythe's best friend. They wanted their own personal multi-eyed, big-headed, skinny-bodied, kind-of-freakish-yet-kind-of-endearing doll that probably spooked a lot of little girls back in 1972. Now, you can't even expect to win the original 1972 Blythe on eBay for under six hundred bucks. I know, because I tried.

Anyway, so I clicked onto the Blythe website and started looking at the pictures in Gina's photo gallery. Some of them had already been

snapshots that she'd taken on photography trips around the world. I liked the way Blythe looked so lifelike, posed against interesting settings: a flaking, graffitied piece of Berlin Wall, or an overgrown garden that seemed like a shady forest if you looked at it from a doll's perspective. Blythe also wore cool outfits as she posed for these snapshots. One minute she was in a curly blonde wig and black, shredded, punker-looking clothes; the next minute she was in a red designer evening gown, complete with a slit up the thigh and a glamorous feather boa. My favorite pictures showed her wearing a fuzzy hand-knit stocking cap, flared seventies disco pants, vintage roller skates that really worked. Compared to Blythe, Barbie was just a sad, stay-at-home suburban wanna-be.

I was nearly halfway through Gina's photo gallery and admiring a photo of two Blythes zooming along in a pink convertible when Sean came back into the room. He didn't say a word. He went up to the computer, reached for the mouse, dragged it to the Start button, and clicked a couple of times. The computer shut down.

"Hey!" I said.

"Time to go," Sean said. "I told you, twenty minutes."

Michael Moore's *Bowling for Columbine* was playing at the Rialto in South Pasadena. The Rialto is a seventy-five-year-old landmark theater that has so far avoided being mowed down and converted into a parking lot for yuppie shoppers in downtown South Pasadena. It's not much to look at when you're just standing outside, but inside is a different story. Sitting in the old-fashioned seats that click into a somewhat-reclining position, looking around at the wide balcony and high ceiling and ornate architecture, you almost expect red velvet curtains to draw open for the first reel of *Gone With The Wind*, or some such movie. It looked to me like the theater could have comfortably seated a few hundred people, but there was maybe a smattering of thirty in the audience, total. In the seat next to mine, Sean groped through the tote bag I'd brought. He was searching for the twenty-ounce bottle of Pepsi we'd smuggled in, despite the sign outside that made it clear that no outside food or drink was allowed. The people behind us talked loudly about somebody's cousin coming to town for the holidays. I closed my eyes and waited for the movie to start. I had dolls on the brain.

When you are engrossed in looking at something as highly fascinating as multi-eyed, big-headed, skinny-bodied dolls dressed up and posed to look like real people around the world, and when you are so rudely interrupted and

brought back to reality by your husband who wants to go see the new Michael Moore movie, then you will most likely still have your head in the clouds, half an hour later, dreaming of collecting more dolls and dressing them up and admiring the way that you have posed them to look like real people. When you are sitting in a seventy-five-year-old movie theater that makes you feel as if you have stepped into a time warp, and your head is in the clouds — when you watch on the big screen in front of you an opening scene where a man gets to choose from a wide variety of guns when he opens an account at a North Country Bank in northern Michigan — when you're thinking of dolls and looking at guns, then your mind begins to tell you that something is not right with the world.

The movie is not entirely about guns. It is not entirely about bowling for Columbine, either. To try to describe, summarize, or explain the themes and issues involved in this two-hour documentary that was brilliantly put together by Michael Moore, I would have to write an analytical research paper, and neither you nor I have the time or strength for that kind of dissertation at this point in time. Prevalent in the movie, though, is the idea that Americans live in a culture of fear, and it is this fear which drives us to violence. You can examine this notion on a normal, everyday level. Consider, for instance, how the media is constantly making the public aware of "news" involving violence, someone else's crimes, someone else's death. Turn on the tv, switch on the radio, open up a newspaper and see for yourself. After so much drama and tragedy and warnings, you could believe that it might happen to you. You become fearful to the point where the idea of arming yourself will assuage any chances of you being the victim. When it comes to someone else's crime, it's not going to be your own death.

Now, go one step further and examine this notion on a larger scale. Consider, for instance, that your fear runs on a greater level. Imagine you're a country, not a person. You've got too many people pissed off at you; you've stuck your army one too many times in places where you really should have been minding your own business. Your past involves a history of violence and crime and death. And so, rather than one or two guns stashed fully loaded in your home, you have an arsenal of thirty-million-dollar fighter planes, depleted uranium missiles, and self-healing mine fields — all of which will safely ensure that when it comes to your crimes, it's not going to be your own death.

One thing that was glaringly obvious to me throughout Moore's documentary was the complete and total absence of women in positions of

power. Men dominated. And not just regular, nice-guy men like my own dear husband and his punk rock chums, but big-talking, macho-swaggering, you-picked-on-me-in-the-schoolyard-so-now-I'm-all-grown-and-gonna-beat-up-on-you-with-my-weapons type of men. Case in point: George Bush. Both of them. Second case in point: Charlton Heston, president of the National Rifle Association and firm believer of the country's "different ethnic groups" as reason to blame for the presence of violence. Third case in point: well, you could fill in at least half a dozen names for this one.

So where are the women leaders, the women presidents? Why is it that we have men in charge of our country? Why is it that we will most likely continue to maintain men in positions of power, positions in which they can ultimately determine for us what is right and what is wrong?

It occurred to me: if women were in charge of negotiations and foreign policy, or if they were in charge of choosing between, hmmm, let's say, A) allocating thirty million dollars to education and a free national healthcare program or B) handing it over to the defense industry to make more bombs to kill innocent civilians in foreign countries — well, what do you think? Would the state of the Union be as violent and aggressive as it is today?

Okay, yes, on one hand, it might be. Margaret Thatcher was a pretty brutal leader when she was the prime minister of England. Golda Meir in Israel was

no angel. And Hilary Clinton, the best chance the US has had of a woman president in years, voted in favor of the attack on Afghanistan and backs Bush in his most recent scheme to invade Iraq.

Then again, after September 11, the first member of Congress to stand up to Bush and vote against the \$40 billion plan to rape our social security system in the name of attacking Afghanistan was California Senator Barbara Lee, definitely not a man.

The question of whether or not our country would be better off with women leaders is one that invites arguments from all sides. One might argue that a woman could be just as ruthless and aggressive as a man. But in making that statement, wouldn't one also be acknowledging that there are gender stereotypes — that men are generally considered more aggressive and dominant than women?

If you think about it, the stereotypes are established pretty early in life. When you walk

into a children's toy store, the toys are definitely separated and categorized. In one section are the girls' playthings: dolls; doll clothes and accessories; dress-up items like imitation feather boas, sparkly purses, and plastic high heels; arts and crafts kits to make jewelry and stained glass bottles; cooking and cleaning items just like Mommy's, but in miniature versions that work almost as well as the real thing. Just look at the Easy Bake Oven and Snack Center, still as popular today in 2002 as it was in 1964.

Over on the other side of the toy store, separated from the girly things, is the boys' section. The selection will include toys that require a more rugged and less delicate sensibility: action figures like wrestlers and superheroes and GI Joe; Hot Wheels; Tonka trucks; construction toys like Erector sets, Legos, and Mega Bloks; and radio and remote-control stunt vehicles including airplanes, paraplans, hovercrafts, sailboats, submarines, ATVs, and skateboards complete with Tony Hawk-lookalike figures. All considered masculine items, all intended for

house is a dollhouse; a doll by any other name is still a doll.

But there you have it: a definite gender bias that exists in children's toys. There is a clearly defined line between what constitutes appropriate playthings for boys and what constitutes appropriate playthings for girls. Girls get toys that are traditionally associated with feminine qualities, and boys get toys that are identified with rougher, tougher, stronger qualities. Crossing over the line is generally socially unacceptable. It is considered atypical and abnormal behavior. If a little girl chose to play with GI Joe rather than Barbie, she would be called a tomboy or a butch or something along those lines. If a little boy chose to play with Barbie rather than GI Joe, he would be called a sissy, a girl, a fag. He'd be better off with GI Joe and his clubhouse, with the maps and charts to plot a war, and the guns and bombs that come with it. After all, it is more socially acceptable for a boy to play with guns than to play with dolls... isn't it?



So what if men had been given dolls to play with when they were younger? Not dolls like G.I. Joe or Power Rangers or Spider Man kind of dolls, but cute dolls, cuddly dolls, dress-them-up-and-brush-their-hair kind of dolls. What if little boys got to play with them and love them and care for them, and what if it was socially acceptable to do so? Would that have conditioned men at a young age to be more caring and more nurturing? And as a whole, would that have helped us be a kinder and more compassionate population, rather than

a society steeped in violence, hate, and aggression?

Imagine, a world where dolls rule.

Going home, I thought about all this in the car and was quiet. I thought about Blythe and how looking at Gina Garan's pictures of her made me smile. I thought about my doll collection tucked away in the big blue suitcase-sized fishing tackle box. I tried to remember the last time I took the dolls out. The Sea Wees, I decided, would need a good hair-brushing when I got home.

—Felizon

NOTES

*If anyone wants to give me a 1972 Kenner Blythe doll for cheap (or free!), or knows of someone who would, I will be your best friend for life. You can come over to my house and play dolls with me any time.

** felizonvidad@hotmail.com.



Felizon Vidad

Ø

Rev. Nørb

Love, Nørb

It's hard to log data with a fist full of Jergens™.

{For clarity's sake, in the first part of this column, the italicized and bolded sentences are Nørb's running commentary to the letters seeking advice, which are in italics. —Todd}

Dear Readership:

Good morning. I am Rev. Nørb. This is my advice column. I have NO FUCKING IDEA what i was thinking when i asked the powers-that-be if i could write an advice column for *Razorcake*. It's already obviously proving to be the worst idea i've ever had since my idea for a nationwide chain of Latino Catholic gay bars called "Hole y Balls." Actually, wait, i take that back: Once, in my youth, i was at a party involving the making of blender drinks, and opted to whip myself up a chunky and delicious beverage consisting of whiskey, ice cream, and bratwurst. That might've been an even stupider idea than this one (in my youthful exuberance, i had forgotten, of course, how repulsive i find the taste of whiskey). I guarantee that the following letters were made up by non-fictitious entities who are not myself (i could, obviously, make up much better fake letters if i was of a mind to), and that, in essence, I'VE GOT ALL THE ANSWERS, although i still am roundly unsure as to who stole the keeshka.

Dear Rev. Nørb:

I just wanna say that i'm a HUGE fan. That last Boris album was simply the bee's knees and i actually had to go out and buy a second copy for my best friend Missy 'cause she wanted to borrow my copy and i totally was like, uh, uh, i listen to this bad boy DAILY.... Anyway, here's my problem (Hey, if you actually liked the last Boris record, i already KNOW your problem.): About a month ago, i was searching through eBay looking for all things Boris when i came across a record by a band called Suburban Mutilation. The description said you were the singer or something, and 'cause as i'm such a big fan, i thought it would be great to hear some totally dope non-Boris pop punk tunez. Next thing i know, i'm in this righteous bidding war with some bitch named "Skank" or something over this album. Every time i bid, she ups me by a nickel. Next thing i know, we're up to \$200.75 and she boosts it up to \$200.80. And that's when it happened: i accidentally forgot to add the decimal point in my bid and ended up bidding \$20,085! Next thing i know, i've won the stupid bid war and i've got some guy insisting that i HAVE to pay up. So, being the resourceful girl i am, i charged it to daddy's card, totally thinking he'd never notice. Anyway, two weeks later i get the album and put it on, and now i feel totally

gypped. This doesn't sound like you at all (Please, Cookie Monster was a very underrated vocalist.). The music's all noisy and fast and screechy. Not very punk at all...(The funny thing is that when said record — The Opera Ain't Over Til the Fat Lady Sings, on Reamed Pork Records, the direct forebear of Bulge — was released [1984 i think], people who were familiar with the band's live show felt that the recording was "too clean" for SUM [dear reader: you'd kinda hafta hear the record to appreciate the enormous craziness of that statement... and, of course, since they're apparently retailing for \$20k right now, if you weren't "fortunate" enough to score a copy during the eleven years it took me to shift all 1,000 units, that doesn't appear real likely]; what's really even funnier is that I AGREE [that is to say, "I DON'T OBJECCCCCT!!! I DON'T OBJECCCCCT!!!"] — as distorted, chaotic, noisy, out-of-tune and fucked-up as that record is, it is NOWHERE NEAR as distorted, chaotic, etc. as we really sounded. Two main reasons: #1) We got all excited when we found out that the studio guy had a Marshall™ stack we could use in lieu of our guitar player's \$90 Crate™ amp — the Crate™ delivered the most feedback-per-pound of any amplification device, ever, and was the secret of our sound, which we didn't realize at the time, because we were a bunch of moronic teenagers from Wisconsin; and #2) Being the company guy that i am, i was practicing the bass parts in my bedroom the night before we recorded, and broke my E-string. I replaced it with the E-string off my first bass [which i wrecked on April 8, 1983, jumping off the stage into the pit during a set at the Wil-Mar Center in Madison opening for H?sker D?... i got slammed further away from my amp than my cord would allow, and, like any good \$50 bass, instead of the cord just coming out, the cord stayed IN and ripped the plate and the wires right out of it, fatally gutting my axe beyond repair], which was cut shorter than appropriate for my bought-new \$150 Kay™ bass. Anyway, i got the thing to stay on, thought it would be okay, was too cheap/punk to go buy new strings, and we got to the studio, tuned everything up, etc., etc., were ready to go, okay, TAPE ROLLING, HERE WE GO, and i hit that first big "BWURRRRRMMMM!!!" on the E that starts off "Daddy Was a Nazi" — and the string just fucking FALLS OFF. Just PLOP! — and the string's lying on the floor. The studio guy let me use his Rickenbacker™, which was cool for about the first ten seconds when i thought i was Bruce Foxtan™, but i quickly realized that RICKENBACKER™ BASSES FUCKING SUCK TO

PLAY, and do not yield anywhere near the proper amount of fucked-upness necessary for a quality hire like SUM. Fuck Marshall™, fuck Rickenbacker™ — Crate™ and Kay™ are the Way and the Light. But, yeah — that album was kind of our sell-out album 'cause of the pussy Marshall™ stack and Rickenbacker™ [and also because we didn't record it on a boombox in our drummer's bedroom, like our track on the Barricaded Suspects compilation {which just got rereleased on CD, even though the only good song is "I Hate the Motorcyclist" by the Dull, but please send me band copies anyway, whoever put it out}]. Brand Awareness is Freedom!} (oh, if you've never heard the album, let me put things in perspective for you: Jello Biafra™ bought about fifteen or twenty copies during his lifetime to give to his "weird friends" [his words] for holiday gifts ["they don't make records that fucked-up any more"] — mull THAT over, folks.) i think the guy was a total thief 'cause it totally is you on this steaming pile of turtle scrode... and now my dad is wiggling out 'cause he got his credit card statement and there's this charge on there for \$20,085 to a guy named Dicky Ballwhacker in Poughkeepsie and he totally KNOWS i'm the one who put it there and he says i'm grounded until i turn eighteen which is a whole FIVE YEARS FROM NOW!!!! Nørb, you're my only hope. I need \$20,085, Nørb, and seeing as you're a big, rich punk singer 'n' all, i was wondering if you'd give it to me. (Well, if you're really a thirteen year old girl, i'll CERTAINLY fucking "give it to you." However, if it's money you want, do what i do when i need a couple thousand bucks i feel i'm rightfully owed: Call up Greg Ross at Go-Kar™ Records twice a day and ask where your check is.) Like i said, i'm your biggest fan and will be 'til the day i DIE, so can you help me out? Maybe if i pay my dad back, he'll let me off restriction. I tried to resell the album on eBay, but the most anyone will bid is \$17.48 (Untrue. Mitch Cardwell from HitList™ just paid \$54 for a copy on eBay™.). i'll even give you the Suburban Mutilation record and the address of the nobbler that ripped me off. Nørb PLEASE HELP!

thanks in advance,
Syndie Felchmonger
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Syndie:

My advice to you is to use whole dollar amounts when bidding online. eBay and other online bidding sites do not require a decimal point to enter valid bids. For example, the next time you are bidding on a Suburban Mutilation album, enter

Rev. Nørb

"25,085" instead of "25,085.00." You will eventually recoup the money you overbid by avoiding future errors of this nature. Also, start spelling your first name with a "C."

Love,
Norb

...our second letter is virtually as inane:

Dear Rev. Nørb,
Hey uhm... I've got a slight problem. Well, my friend, really... you see, my friend has got this hamster named Sally... (That's funny — there's this guy who works in the same building as me whose cross-dressing identity is "Sally." What's really amusing about THAT is that he's got these business cards with his photo on it labeled "owner," and then a photo of "Sally" on the other side, labeled "Receptionist" — and what's funny about THAT is that i can't help but visualize this guy sitting around in drag all day at the receptionist's desk, then dashing around like Robin Williams in Mrs. Doubtfire, changing clothes in a madcap frenzy whenever someone walks in.) and my, uh, friend thought it would look cool if she spraypainted Sally entirely bright green, and shaved and sprayed the sides of his head into a purple mohawk (Well, i'll run it past him at our next building cook-out.) Well my friend is kind of... dumb. (Yeah, i know. Ask her if you can tape her Suburban Mutilation album sometime.) So she used that latex spraypaint crap. Now, Sally's fur is really stiff and he seems slightly retarded (Did somebody spray paint YOU bright green, or is your "retardation" congenital?). He'll just lay on the little spinny wheel on her back, waving his paws up and down and in circular motions. He walks in circles and squeaks incessantly during the night (Are you sure you haven't just transformed your hamster into Kobe Tai?). He humps carrots. (Never mind. You turned him into Shay Sweet.) He gets out during the night and chews through my guitar strings and makes holes in my drums. Little bastard. Should i just flush him already?

Thanks,
-Mister Sock Puppet

Dear MSP:
The fact that your pet rodent's newly acquired attitude compels it to destroy your musical gear is likely merely a heightened level of proactive self-preservation brought about its having had the misfortune of being forced to listen to you playing atonal accompaniments to White Stripes and Hives songs in a futile attempt to impress your girlfriend once too often. Your pet has merely been given awareness of the age-old street maxim that "Talk Minus Chewing = 0", and has taken steps to cut off the root of his abuse at the source. Disregard these antics — it's simply the price one pays sometimes for pet ownership, just as one or two completely devoured articles of furniture (hmm... wasn't that Vic Bondi's old band?) per week is considered a fair trade-off for all the years of great acquaintance-mauling a young Rottweiler will provide. Further, your short-sighted lack of scientific inquisitiveness has caused you to completely

miss the boat on Sally's true calling: Mister Sock Puppet, unto thee i charge this sacred duty — **GET THEE TO A ROCK-O-METER, TOOT SWEET!!!!** (you will doubtless recall the Rock-O-Meter™ from the movie *Rock 'n' Roll High School* — the scientific device into which white mice could be inserted, then subjected to various levels of rock-itude, in an attempt to catalog the ill effects of rock music on mammalian life forms. I assume any reasonably equipped high school science lab has one.) I mean, let's face it: There really have been no



Late Breaking Boris
European Vacation Photos
Pertaining to
Last Issue's Column.

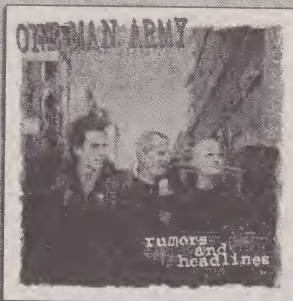
significant advances in Rock-O-Meter research for over two decades, owing to the general belief that Rock-O-Meter-ology had hit an evolutionary dead end when Ramones-levels of rock-itude were charted. And this is understandable: As you know, when the laboratory mice were subjected to relatively low levels of rock-itude — Pat Boone, Kansas, Peter Frampton, The Lost Sounds — they exhibited little if any negative reaction (i already made the Fuck-Ups joke in *Flipside*, sorry). Mid-grade Rolling Stones™-type rock-itude levels caused noticeable agitation in the subjects however, and Ramones-level doses caused total combustion of the test animals, rendering future explorations of post-Ramones rock-itude levels seemingly pointless: **IF YOU ROCK HARD ENOUGH, THE MOUSE WILL BLOW UP.** End of story. Therefore, to the best of my knowledge, no one ever bothered to run a Rock-O-Meter study on like Teengenerate, or "Roaring Blood" by

Guitar Wolf, or even the CD remix of *Raw Power*, as the results were a foregone conclusion: *The mouse would blow up. Big deal.* As a result, the interest in Rock-O-Meter-ology atrophied; funds dried up; the discipline, for all intents and purposes, ceased to be. But ah, Mister Sock Puppet! *DOCTOR Sock Puppet!* What wondrous cogs of fertile inquiry you have set into motion in the precision-crafted Betamax™ of my mind! Rock-O-Meter-ology stalled fatally after the invention of the Ramones *only because no Rock-O-Meter-ologist of times past had the foresight to see past Variable X — the intensity of the rock-itude* (not surprising, given the fact that they were all a buncha squares [tho' this could be belied by the fact that the Vince Lombardi High science lab ca. 1979 clearly displayed signage making reference to not one but two Song Titles O' Rock: "Silence Is Golden" by the Tremoloes {which ain't gonna blow up anyone} and "White Mice" by Sweet {which actually might}). HOWEVER! With your unwitting help, i can see shimmering vistas of rebirth and renewal on the glorious Rock-O-Meter horizon! We can RESURRECT this noble field of scientific endeavor by making adjustments to *Variable Y — THE MASS OF THE TEST SUBJECT!!!!* Is it not true, Mr. Pup, that, generally speaking, HAMSTERS ARE, IN FACT, MUCH LARGER THAN MICE??? And would it not also be true, Mr. Pup, that a test subject of GREATER MASS could reasonably be expected to absorb a HIGHER DOSE OF ROCK-ITUDE before exploding??? And COULD IT NOT AT LEAST BE THEORIZED, Mr. Pup, that a LARGER TEST SUBJECT, SUCH AS YOUR HAMSTER, MIGHT (theoretically) NOT (gasp!) BE ATOMIZED INTO A CLOUD OF WHITE VAPOR BY ANY ROCK FORCE OF LESSER INTENSITY THAN, SAY, TEENGENERATE'S COVER OF "THIS IS ROCK & ROLL" BY THE KIDS??? This, then, is your CALLING, Mr. Pup! Let the jaded and the jaundiced mouth and re-mouth the hoary rhetoric of "Has Science Gone Too Far?!"! By Thunders, if ye're HALF the swab i thinks ye are, ye, as i, shall turn thy back on times past, and turn thy front to A GLORIOUS NEW FUTURE OF TOMORROW™ by asking "**HAS SCIENCE MAYBE NOT GONE FAR ENOUGH????!?!?!?!!**" (and now, okay,

fine, you're saying "Sure, Rev. Nørb, you TALK a good Glorious New Future of Tomorrow. But what are YOU doing in the name of Advancing Science? What experiments do YOU conduct in the name of glorifying tomorrow's new future of futuristic newness?? Perhaps it is YOUR Science, YOUR cerebriological kung-fu, that does not go far enough!" Feh! I resent the implication, and refuse to respond to the Senator's allegations! **REV. NØRB'S FUCKING SCIENCE GOES ALL THE WAY, DADDY!!!** And, not that i owe anything to anyone who goes around naming their hamster after a fucking cross-dresser [and, Jesus, why "Sally," of all the stoopid names, for his cross-dresser identity? If i liked dressing up like a chick {which i do, but not often enough to warrant carving out a separate personality for myself}, i'd give myself some completely lunatic chick name, like "Torii" or something. Oh, wait, that's a guy's name, unless the center fielder for **RAZORCAKE 15**

Rev. Nørb

PUNK ROCK



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THE FORGOTTEN
Control Me
CD (1998)



THE UNSEEN
The Anger And The Truth
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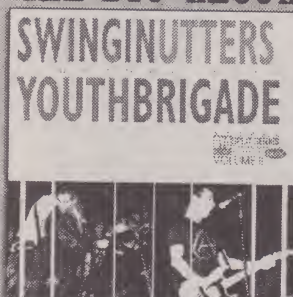


PISTOL GRIP
The Shots From The Kalico Rose
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- THE BYO RECORDS SPLIT SERIES -



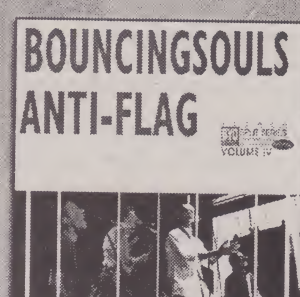
LEATHERFACE
HOT WATER MUSIC - VOLUME I
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YOUTH BRIGADE - VOLUME II
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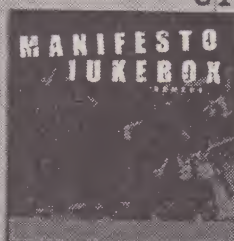


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Various Artists
CD (1998)



YOUTH BRIGADE
Somebody's Gonna Get It
Various Artists
CD (1998)

the Minnesota Twins is actually a chick. Well, whatever. I guess i'd just be "Nørbii" then, or is that a guy's name too? If so, has "Tomoko" been taken?, but, since i, as Earth's Greatest Rocker, have a certain public face to maintain, i will grace you with an overview of the project which — MERELY IN THE NAME OF SCIENCE, AND THE REPUBLIC FOR WHICH IT STANDS — i have currently whelmed myself, body and soul: I call it... **THE SPEEDCORE ENDEAVOR**. In short, i'm jerking off to porno movies. I know, i know, big deal, right? Ah, but NOW i'm jerking off to them on DVD. Is this beginning to make sense yet? I'm also TAPING the DVDs onto VHS tapes [porno DVDs are rarely copy-protected, which i find fucking amazing, because even the DVD that came with my Mad Capsule Markets CD was copy-protected]. Now, HERE'S where it gets good: FIRST i tape [and jerk off to] the movie in fast motion — assuming most DVD player conventions are more or less the same as mine is, this initial run-through is done on the "two clicks fast" speed — where you hit the fast forward button twice, and two rightward-pointing arrows appear on the screen. In case you're unfamiliar with the process, viewing DVDs at the double-fast speed is not like watching a videotape on fast-forward, where the movement is merely sped up: Double-clicking the fast-forward button causes the movie to play as a rapidly-progressing series of still images, so it's sort of like watching a quickly-moving slide show [minus the commentary by Patty and Selma], therefore, watching a porno movie on double-fast is like PUSSY. PUSSY AT AN ANGLE. HIP. ASS. ASS AT A DIFFERENT ANGLE. ASS FURTHER AWAY FROM CAMERA AND PART OF BACK. ENTIRE BACKSIDE AND BACK OF HEAD. ENTIRE BACKSIDE AND BACK OF HEAD AT DIFFERENT ANGLE. Etc. You're kind of just jerking off to a riot of fast-changing sexual imagery [needless to say, Science suggests you spare not the mind-altering substances during research, so long as they do not impair your ability to ejaculate]. A standard five-to-six scene porno DVD is over in about, i dunno, ten minutes? Fifteen? Five? I never timed it. It's hard to log data with a fist full of Jergens™. Anyway, when that's done, i run 'er again — this time just one arrow fast. As opposed to two-arrows-fast motion, one-arrow-fast motion IS actually like watching a sped-up videotape, not a sequence of still images [obviously, from a technical standpoint, every motion picture is ultimately a sequence of still images... but you know what i mean]. One-arrow-fast speed also has the misfortune of yielding a soundtrack of sorts — fragmented blips and blurts as the movie cruises along — but, obviously, anyone who's watched pornographic films in any quantity realizes that these things are always best viewed with the MUTE button hit and the stereo on anyway [my new fave porno soundtrack music is the *Beat Beat Beat* series of Merseybeat rarities double CD sets, which cause all manner of happy lab accidents to occur: Johnny Sandon & the Remo Four singing about making a "magic potion...to stimulate her devotion" during an ejaculation sequence; Danny Storm and the Strollers urging "let the sun shine in... on my backdoor one day" during the obvious activity, etc...]. Therefore, the sped-up [yet still "realistic"] pace, coupled with the MUTE option, hearkens wistfully back to the days of sit-

ting in peep show booths, watching pornos projected silently [save for the filthy whirrs and clicks of the movie projector] on the back of the stall door, but also allows the viewer his [or her] first opportunity to see anything he [or she] might've liked the first time thru as something other than a sequence of static images. So you jerk off again. This time through takes, like, what, forty-five minutes or something, during which time you SWEAR that you are the biggest freak/dunce/fuckwad in the world, and will go to bed following the conclusion of the one-arrow-fast taping. Which you don't do, because by the time the one-arrow-fast taping is completed, your interest has been piqued



It's already obviously proving to be the worst idea i've ever had since my idea for a nationwide chain of Latino Catholic gay bars called "Hole y Balls."

again. The third time thru, i just tape my favorite scene — or my favorite scene plus parts of any other scenes i might particularly dig — in regular motion. Invariably — assuming there's one pretty good scene in the movie, which there usually is — the fact that the motion is now slowed down to real time speed, and the duration of said scene now appears like an near-endless visual-sexual buffet [as opposed to "fast food" and "energy bar"] renews prurient interest, and i jerk off a third time. When all this merry fol-de-rol is completed, i go back to my favorite PARTS of scenes, and tape them in slow motion [PAUSE + the fast forward button, from one to three arrows slow {one being the slowest}]. This usually

works out amazingly well, because, the first time thru, it's just like WHEE! PORNO! LOTION! SPURT! The second time thru, i've already established a favorite scene, which is likely the scene i jerk off to. The third time thru is probably the same scene. Said scenes generally tend to be girl/girl scenes, unless there's a scene involving an Asian female, in which case, i likely tape both/all. The fourth, slow-mo time thru, i'm oft-times beginning to burn out on the girl/girl scene, which works out well: Slow motion is obviously meant for cum shots. Soooo... i tape any and all top-flight cum shot action, and jerk off for a ridiculous a fourth time. Then i eject the tape, mark it "SPEEDCORE X" [i alphabetize the volumes using the QWERTYUIOP Model — so volume one was *Speedcore Q*, volume two was *Speedcore W*, etc.], wash my hands, and go to bed. The amazing thing about this all is that i manage to jerk off FOUR TIMES in under TWO HOURS, which i NEVER recall having done under any other circumstances. I mean, that's a fucking LOT of seed spilt in a relatively short interval in the name of science; surely you grant me that? But anyway, anyway, anyway — the scientist in you is like YES, GREAT, WE LOVE TO HEAR YOU REGALE US WITH TALES OF COPIOUS MASTURBATION, WHAT THE FUCK DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH SCIENCE??? Well, glad you asked that, Mr. Pup. What it has to do with science is that i, Rev. Nørb, am preparing my neurological systems for *THE EVENTUAL PERILOUS HOP TO THE SIX-AND-A-HALF-DIMENSIONAL B-SIDE UNIVERSE!!!* I will, for the uninitiated, summarize the origins of my theories of the nature of the B-side universe: 1. Physicists have, for the last decade or so, postulated that our universe has "ten or eleven" dimensions; 2. There are differing theories on where the other Mystery Dimensions are; some say that the missing six or seven dimensions are all wrapped up in a tiny ball somewhere, others that the missing dimensions form a "dwarf twin" universe; 3. It's theorized that these unknown dimensions splitting from our known dimensions was the cause [result?] of the Big Bang, but, hmm, now that i think about it, 4. How many dimensions does our universe have, anyway? Scientists will generally say "three spatial dimensions and one temporal dimension," but 5. Is that three dimensions or four dimensions, then? And 6. Why is it the standard view of Science that "space" and "time" are "the same" — hence the expression "space/time" — but that the dimensions we experience fall into two different categories, "spatial" and "temporal"? Therefore 7. wouldn't i be justified in saying that we live in a "three or four" dimensional universe, since no one can give a clear, unqualified answer if our universe is 3D or 4D, and, thusly 8. doesn't it strike you, then, as a bit odd, that the total number of dimensions is put at "ten or eleven," the total number of Mystery Dimensions is "six or seven," and the total number of dimensions we experience in our universe is "three or four"? Like, they're ALWAYS within ONE of the authoritative dimension count, but never closer or further away THAN one? Therefore, from this data, i, Rev. Nørb, Earth's Greatest Rocker and Scientist At Large, have hypothesized the following Theory Of The Six-And-A-Half-Dimensional B-Side Universe: **RAZORCAKE 17**

Rev. Nørb

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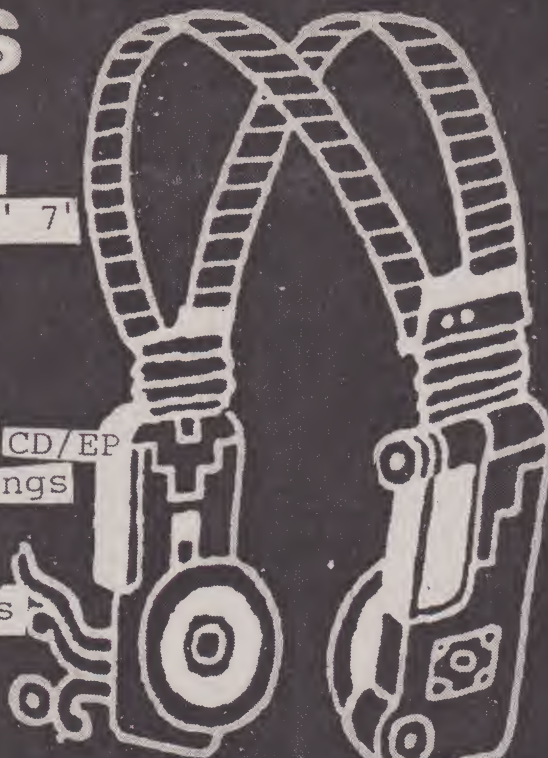
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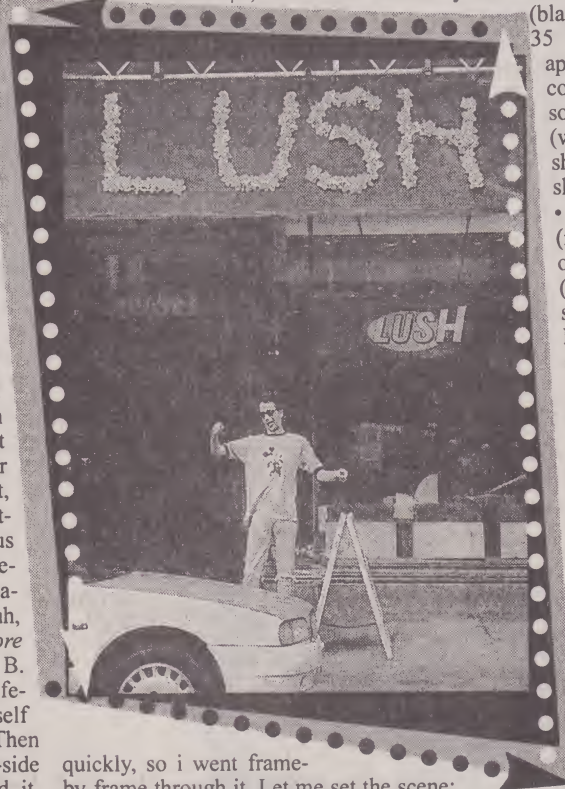
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The reason everyone is always off by exactly ONE dimension is because there's one dimension that is common to both universes: Time. Further, the original [or at least preceding] universe was eleven-dimensional. The Big Bang was caused by the fourth dimension, Time, shearing in half [or at least into two different hunks] 'cause it was DEFECTIVE! FAULTY! FUCKED UP! PLANNED OBSOLESCENCE, I SAY!!! There's three dimensions on our side of the time-rupture; six on theirs, and both universes share the cracked dimension in the middle, Time [which is why Time behaves so screwily compared to Length, Width, and Depth]. However since we [and they] only have access to HALF the fourth dimension, we're stuck going one way on it. Like, we got the northbound lanes, they got the southbound lanes, and there's no exits. IT'S WORSE THAN THE FUCKING INDIANA TOLLWAY!!! Both our 3.5 dimensional universe, and their 6.5 dimensional universe, exist in the same place, at the same time, BUUUUUUUUUUTTTT... they're going backwards in time as we're going forwards [my apologies to anyone who already read this stream of horseshit elsewhere], so, if Reality was a big cassette tape with the Briefs on one side and the Spits on the other, our "Silver Bullets" is their "Take Back the Alley." Now, i, Reverend Nørb, Earth's Greatest Rocker And Damn Proud Of It, have come to the conclusion that i, Reverend Nørb, Earth's Greatest Rocker etc., am some day, whether i like it or not, going to die. I find this somewhat unacceptable. Now, i realize that there are various earthly theories on how one might best side-step Oblivion, and that's fine. However, i occasionally am struck with the feeling that, uh, perhaps no one is really minding the store upstairs, and i'd best come up with a Plan B. This is my Plan B: Sometime during my lifetime, i gotta find some way to fling myself across to the other side of the time rupture. Then i can just chill out in the 6.5 dimensional B-side universe — where Time, as we understand it, flows backwards — until i'm about four years old in this universe again. Then i'll fling myself back here, and start heading forwards thru Time again, and i'll keep doing it until i think of something better to do, like riding first the Up and then the Down escalators between the 3rd and 4th floors of Younkens™ or something. To pull this off, however, i am almost certainly going to have to demolish my preexisting concepts of Time; the moment of orgasm, regardless of the banality of its production, must somehow [i'm guessing] throw some manner of electrochemical spike into the usual tepid morass of psycho-neural activity — therefore, ejaculating four times while watching the same porno imagery played at four different speeds can't HELP but begin to rearrange my brain and nervous system into a format tending towards greater compatibility with our 6.5 dimensional B-side twins. Plus, i mean, come on, jerking off successfully four times in two hours, that's fab and gear! Now, of course, i realize that you are all Men [and Women] of Science here, and you're naturally skeptical of my genius. See that you are. You likely wish to see some manner of tangible result stemming from my research into the Speedcore Endeavor. Very well. I was speedcoring a flick called *American Cheries* — that's right, not *American CHERRIES*, but *American Shay-*

REEEZE [oh, and i'm SURE that was intentional and not a spelling error; pornographers are an erudite bunch]. The two-arrow-fast session transpired as scheduled. During the first scene of the one-arrow-fast screening, i saw something that looked like an unscheduled blip flash on the screen. I backed things up, and ran the blip at normal speed. It lasted approximately a second and a half [my stopwatch said 1.45 seconds when i timed it later; since the blip appears to contain forty-eight different frames, and the video equipment i most recently used used a thirty-frames-per-second format, the blip might be as much as 1.6 seconds long]. I ran it on slow-motion, and it still went by too



quickly, so i went frame-by-frame through it. Let me set the scene: *American CHERIES* starts with a nude [and quite serviceable, meow meow] girl, butt to the camera, making out with some goon who looks kind of like my old boss Richard from Domino's™ on steroids. For no apparent reason, there is then... The Blip. Slowed down from its original 1.6 second maximum possible duration, here is, frame-by-frame, what flashed on the screen. "Black" means a solid black background with white letters; "White" means white background w/black letters [the numbers are not part of The Blip]. 1 (black): LOVE IS HATE • 2 (white) BOMBS KEEP US FREE • 3 (black) TASTE is the ENEMY of ART • 4 (large star shape over the couple) • 5 (white) minds are for PEOPLE who THINK • 6 (black) beLIEve • 7 (white) WHAT • 8 (black) YOU • 9 (white) ARE TOLD • 10 (black) you WANT • 11 (crazy scrawly hand lettering that's black, white, and partially see-thru over the couple) ELVIS • 12 (white) TRUTH • 13 (black) but you NEED • 14 (black) LIES • 15 (black) MONEY is the ROOT of ALL • 16 (screen mostly black, white horizontal stripe at top, shot of couple partially visible above stripe) • 17 (white) FREEDOM • 18 (bottom two-thirds black, two white horizontal stripes, couple scene visible between the stripes) • 19 (black) is a MYTH • 20 (four white horizontal stripes, black areas alternate with couple

shot areas between the stripes) • 21 (white) ELVIS is ALIVE • 22 (couple shot with black burst shape coming in from top right) • 23 (black) WE WE we WE we • 24 (couple shot with black burst shape coming in from top left) • 25 (white) are DEAD • 26 (crude drawing of singer, maybe Elvis, in white outline with black interior, superimposed over couple) • 27 (black) INFORMATION is POWER • 28 (black screen with couple shot partially visible in various broken horizontal stripe shapes) • 29 (white) SUSPICION BREEDS CONFIDENCE • 30 (black) A STILL • 31 • (white) TOUNGE (sic) • 32 (crude possible tongue shape in black w/white outline superimposed over couple shot) • 33 (black) MAKES A HAPPY • 34 (white) LIFE • 35 (black) WATCH MORE TV • 36 (what appears to be the word "MOJO" written across couple shot in huge scrawly crazy letters with some parts white and other parts see-thru) • 37 (white) WATCH MORE TV • 38 (white cross shapes over partially black, partially couple shot background) • 39 (black) LOVE is HATE • 40 (white) BOMBS KEEP US FREE • 41 (radiating black spike shapes superimposed over couple) • 42 (black) know future • 43 (vaguely populuxe black & white design superimposed over couple) • 44 (white) EVERY THING • 45 (huge asterisk type shape over couple) • 46 (black) ANSWER AUTHORITY • 47 (black) YOU KNOW • 48 (white) ALL HAIL RONNI RAYGUN! ...then the chick takes off the guy's clothes, he gets on his knees and goes down on her, she goes down on him, he goes back down on her [Richard! My man!] on a lawnchair, then they fuck doggy style by the pool. But, yeah, the whole Blip took 1.6 seconds max, with each of the 48 frames cataloged above lasting, presumably, 1/30 of a second. Obviously, discovery of this message surely indicates that i am, without question, the Chosen One; destined to hop the Time Chasm as often as i see fit and to live for all Loopy Eternity. It is not often that a guy sitting home jerking off to porno movies can make this claim, but... let's face it: My sexual experiences are way fucking more post-three-dimensional than yours, and i don't even have anyone *helping* me right now. The applications for internship are available thru *Razorcake*). Anyway, Pup, the only thing you need to remember is that you gotta make sure your hamster is white before you try to blow him up; otherwise it's cruelty to animals. Therefore, my advice to you is this: Throw your hamster, alive, into a large pail of either peroxide or bleach (remember, only albinos can be blown up without inflicting needless pain). Sooner or later, his fur should be really white and his eyes should be really red (*i'm immune! suburban disease!* ...er, sorry, that was lame), at which point in time he's fair game for Rock-O-Meter testing. Report back with your findings, and i'll see about the status of your grant. Thank you for advancing humanity.

Love,
Nørb

This ends another exciting installment of my advice column. Please send your questions to me, Rev. Nørb, at either PO Box 1173, Green Bay WI 54305 USA Earth, or <nrevorb@greenbaynet.com>, and remember: The future of basketball depends on those whose last names end in the letter "C," so you'd better plan accordingly.

RAZORCAKE 19



Designated Dale

I'm Against It

Sounds like Caesar should've started wolfing down less drive-thru and more CAESAR SALADS once the pack of hot dogs appeared mysteriously on the back of his neck.

responsible — *adj.* 1. Accountable, as for something within one's power. 2. Involving duties or obligations. 3. Being the source or cause of something. 4. Having the capacity to make moral decisions. 5. Able to discharge obligations or pay debts. 6. Reliable or dependable.

ic of obese children. He argued that the high fat, sugar, and cholesterol content of McDonald's food is "a very insipid, toxic kind of thing" when scarfed on a regular basis by young kids. A regular basis, you say? Well, NO SHIT, Sammy-boy.

The plaintiffs include a Bronx teenager who ate every meal at McDonald's for three years while living in a homeless shelter. Um, yeah — you're fucking HOMELESS and eating at McDonald's three times a day for three years? Only in

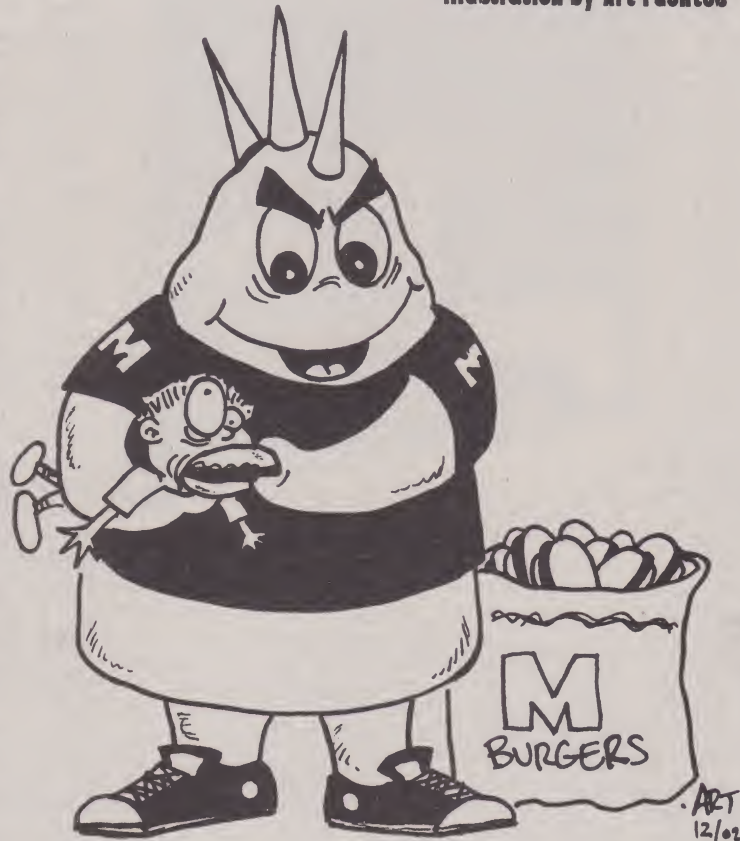
that they always believed that McDonald's was healthy for their children, their genius reasoning being that they never saw anything in the McDonald's restaurants they visited providing information about the ingredients in the food. Calling

all dumbasses, calling all dumbasses — the last time you visited McDonald's, do you remember looking clearly over the counter and seeing those steel, square-shaped vats with the boiling liquid inside them? They ain't jacuzzis, dickheads! Believe it or not, those vats are called *deep fryers*. The bubbling liquid in the vats is called *cooking oil* and those baskets they drop down into that cooking oil are full of *french fries*. Wow! Submerging french fries in cooking oil to cook 'em? Whodda thunkit!? I want to personally meet these parents and offer to sell them the Brooklyn Bridge at a really good market price. If they are REALLY as stupid as their "claims" about McDonald's, I'm going to be one rich motherfucker. RICH, I tells ya!

But it gets better, dear reader — believe it or not, these lawsuits aren't just simply restricted "for the children". Earlier this past July, fifty-six-year-old Caesar Barber had filed a suit with the Supreme Court of New York against McDonald's, Burger King Corp., KFC Corp. and Wendy's International. Caesar's blaming the chains for making him and others overweight, as well as raising his risk of illness related to being overweight. In his case, Mr. Barber, a 5'10", 272-pound maintenance worker, said he had heart attacks in 1996 and 1999, and has diabetes, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol. Sounds like Caesar should've started wolfing down less drive-thru and more CAESAR SALADS once the pack of hot dogs appeared mysteriously on the back of his neck.

Brad Lerman, McDonald's leading lawyer in these recent

Illustration by Art Fuentes



The definition *seems* clear enough, doesn't it? If you can comprehend what you read, it is. Yet there are some people stuck in that bass-ackward dimension of our existence who seem to think that *any* kind of responsibility is someone else's chore to handle. Recently, this display of idiotic (and fucking sickening) proportion has once again been brought to my attention — the obesity lawsuits against the McDonald's corporation. And by the way, folks, let's get one thing out on the table here — in no way am I defending McDonald's, or any other corporation for that matter. That's not the reason why I'm about to go into detail here. We all know that there are horns holding up McDonald's gleaming halo, absolutely. The agenda with this particular column is about taking a look on how ridiculously fucking *stupid* people can seem, or, god forbid, *really are*. We clear on this? Good.

This past November, lawyers filed a class-action lawsuit against McDonald's on behalf of New York children who have suffered health problems, including diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. Well, excuse me for saying, but I think I can safely guess that McDonald's food isn't the *only* thing the in state of New York (or anywhere else) that causes health risks among children. And aren't *children's* eating habits supposed to be watched over by their lazy, goddamn parents or guardians to begin with? It obviously appears not. In federal court in Manhattan, a lawyer named Samuel Hirsch alleged that McDonald's has created a national epidemic

"Young individuals are not in a position to make a choice after the onslaught of advertising and promotions," Hirsch said in an interview. Well, shit the bed, Samuel! Sure! Why point *any* amount of blame to the parents, let alone older children, who are smart enough to know better, when you can blame our ol' whipping post television or print ads? Why not go after toy companies while you're at it, you douchebag?

America. Another is a thirteen-year-old boy from Staten Island who says he ate McDonald's food three to four times a week and is now 5'4" and 278 pounds. Well, can I ask what ELSE this Staten Island ferry was stuffing down his throat the REST of the week? Wheat germ? Alfalfa sprouts? Please — don't insult my fucking intelligence. But what really slaps the shit-flavored icing on the cake here is the *parents* of these children. These parents are claiming

cases, has summed it up best. He insists these lawsuits are a frivolous attempt to cash in on the Golden Arches, "the kind of lawsuit that shouldn't be in court," he says. Going further, Lerman says "People don't go to sleep thin and wake up obese. The understanding and comprehension of what hamburgers and french fries do has been with us for a long, long time." Absolutely. It couldn't be any clearer. Ya know, Mr. Lerman, we should also take the time here to comment to these sue-happy fucks that washing those hamburgers and fries down with McDonald's milkshakes (or ANY milkshake, for that matter) can add to the glutton's problem as well.

McDonald's has asked Judge Robert Sweet to dismiss the case, arguing those who filed the claims cannot show their health problems were caused by Big Macs and insisting the company has never misled customers about its food. The judge did not immediately rule on the request, and to me that's a scary thought because this recent snafu against McDonald's could cause a chain reaction of class action lawsuits from all those others who choose to waive their own eating responsibilities, aka, *pass the buck*. Add to that, there are already those campaigning this very moment who argue that junk food such as Big Macs should be taxed in the same way as cigarettes. They say the billions of dollars raised from the "fat tax", also known as "heavy duty", should be used to fund anti-obesity education programs. Fuck that. It sounds a lot like the tobacco tax that the Duke of Dimwits, Rob Reiner, rallied for out here in California and helped to eventually succeed. Where's all that tobacco tax money going anyway, Rob? All that supposed healthcare? I live out here in So. Cal. and I haven't seen a friggin' penny of it put to use. Must be in the bank, gaining interest, or lining pockets, furthering *special* interest. Kind of like the school's share of the California Lotto. Makes one think. And for those of you who don't remember, Reiner played a hippie named "Meathead" in that great old television show from the '70s, *All In The Family*. Go figure.

What I'm trying to say here is that people need to take responsibility for their own

actions. People shouldn't just want to. They *need* to. Period. McDonald's is no stranger from being brought to court by senseless shits who would probably have someone else wipe their ass for them if it were possible. Remember the hot coffee incident against McDonald's with the seventy-nine-year-old bat who spilt coffee on herself in her car? She removes the lid to add cream and sugar while trying to balance the cup between her legs, accidentally splashing it around and burns herself pretty good. Hey, fuckface — coffee is HOT, remember? VERY hot. Unless you get it ICED, don't sit there and dick around with it half-assedly, because you-know-what might happen. But what the hell — if you *do* get hurt by your own stupidity, just go to court and cause a domino effect of laws for drive-up windows to post dummy signs for fucks like yourself who don't know how to handle hot liquids. Jesus Christ, what's next? Suing a hotel chain because a rush of hot water suddenly erupts out of a showerhead and reddens someone's back?

Don't laugh. Things just as ridiculous have been brought up on the courtroom chopping block. Several cases of kids who have hurt themselves stagediving have been brought to court, from small clubs, to large hall venues, right up to festivals like Lollapalooza. The parents of these youngsters actually have the gall to testify in court that whoever's in charge of the venue (that their little darling was injured at) assumes the responsibility of the safety of their kid. WRONG. Once again — *passing the buck*. ANYONE who has taken part in this wild abandon at a gig knows the consequences of spring-boarding off a stage and into an audience. For starters, the crowd might not be that receptive in catching your flailing-fish-out-of-water ass and will part like the Red Sea, but you're already airborne off the stage... crash. The person who jumps straight into the stage lighting or air duct hanging from the ceiling? Smash. I remember seeing a guy open up his whole forehead on an air duct above the stage during a Big Drill Car show at Bogart's (RIP) in Long Beach, CA years back. He kept on rockin', though. Staggering about, but rockin'. Then there's also the likely occurrence of

just how you'll land — flat on your back? (Chris!) Face first? Landing on and wiping out a table full of glasses and/or bottles? Or how about the ever-popular (but always accidental) feet-first-into-someone's-girlfriend-thereby-starting-a-full-scale-fistfight? Then there's the occasional ass-kickings brought on by unnecessary sparring with the security of the clubs.

Undeniably, any of these injuries are the responsibility of the person wishing to cut loose at a show — not the owners of the venues themselves. It's easy to understand why some places close so easily — not because of fun-loving unruliness, but because of skyrocketing insurance premiums brought on by the "not my children"-type of parents. Hey, Mommy and Daddy, if you were responsible enough yourself, you'd teach your kids the golden rule — you play, you pay. As it is, clubs and/or venues have enough problems with jackassalopes in court whining about how their drunk driving was caused due to the fact that the bartender gave them too much to drink. That the bartender gave them too much to drink? Hey, Tippy McStagger, I have a suggestion for you — why not fatally wrap your vehicle around a tree the next time you decide to drive drunk solo? You'll save the owner of the place you're blaming your own stupidity on some time, not to mention the expensive, tax-paid courtroom time. More importantly, it would mean fewer finger-pointing fucks like *yourself* breathing my air. Corpses don't need no air.

What I'm trying to get at, folks, is that responsibility is nothing new, believe it or don't. It's been around since the dawn of time, it's *not* a four-letter word, and any one person who honestly has a problem with what I touched on here obviously has a personal problem with the "right and wrong" grasp on life, aka, "their ass and a hole in the ground". I think I can rest assured that the beady eyes reading this column have quite a bit of sense stuffed up in that noggin' of theirs, though. How do I know? You've all got a copy of *Razorcake* in your dirty little hands, don't you?

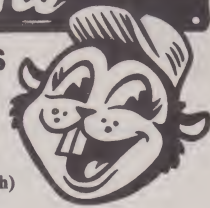
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Money

Lazy Mick



Later, we got into an argument over who was going to pay for the shots, which is the best kind of argument to have with an off-duty bartender.

Recollections from Philadelphia

I have recently returned from Philadelphia, a city that strives to capitalize on its relationship to the founding of the world's most dominant democracy. This, however, is pretty much a farce as the real heavy lifting (menacing and massacring of indigenous peoples) was done elsewhere. There is a strange cult at work in the city, which converts perfectly rational people into rabid Eagles fans. They congregate at the river every Sunday morning in weird-smelling hats accented with bald eagle feathers to do calisthenics, pass bilge leavings from mouth to mouth and engage in other rituals. Strangers to Philadelphia will be happy to know that there is indeed much brotherly love in evidence, an example of which I observed firsthand in a taxi cab when the driver asked my permission before berating another driver as a "stupid cock-sucking, mother-fucking cunt." Also, I had the strangest urge to dress like a gay sailor, an urge I did not resist.

After a long voyage by plane and shorter trips by train and subway, I made it my hotel with just enough time to get changed, indulge aforementioned urges, fill a flask with twelve-year-old Irish whiskey and make it to the gig.

I had been asked a few days prior to the event if I'd like to emcee a reading at the North Star Bar in place of Neal Pollack, whose immense demand on the geopolitical front had prevented him from attending. This reading was part of the 215 Literary Festival, which featured distinguished writers like Dave Eggers, Zadie Smith, Jeffrey Eugenides, Sarah Vowell, Gabe Hudson, Ben Marcus, Jonathan Ames and many others. I do not know

why I was invited, nor did I ask.

I made my to the North Star Bar, where the patrons signaled the bartender for more grog by tapping their glasses with hooks affixed to prosthetic devices and a diseased parrot squawked quotations from *Madame Bovary* in French.

The establishment was divided into four rooms: 1) the bar proper, which was equipped with a lots of

Him: Eight dollars.

Me: I'm on the list.

Him: I don't have a list.

Me (appreciating the difficult position this man is in, who in a former life was a Ukrainian ice fisherman who had endured bitter cold, brutal work and rough sport with his fellow fisher folk, but was now reduced to simply looking like he'd be up for any trouble I might care to start while restraining from starting

thing, the answer was always "everything's under control" even if the person who was claiming authority over the situation was dressed like a gay sailor. I don't say this out of disrespect to gays, sailors, or gay sailors. Gary Numan once told me during an interview the secret to performing is to look like you belong in the song. As soon as I heard I'd be reading at a place called the North Star Bar, a "uniform" popped into my head. A theme came into being. A motif, if you will.

Description of "uniform": One pair of pointy white shoes with crepe soles (a.k.a. Creepers), one pair of charcoal Dickies, one belt studded with three rows of pyramid spikes, a sleeveless black shirt with decorative epaulets adorned with metal stars, a striped tie, and a sailor hat like the one the Skipper wore in the television sitcom *Gilligan's Island*. The uniform revealed several of my nautically themed tattoos, which are mandatory for veterans of the U.S. Navy, of which I am one.

Was I aware that in certain parts of nearly every city in America my uniform would send signals about my sexual preference that were not consistent with my actual sexual preference?

Yes.

Did I care?

No.

The only people my uniform would upset or provoke would be homophobes, and who really gives a fuck what a homophobe thinks anyway? As long as I didn't refer to anyone with a wink as my "Good Buddy" everything would be fine.

I greeted the crowd and read a short list of instructions, including unsea-



four legged devices called stools; 2) the pool room (self explanatory) festooned with ads for bands that would soon appear in the 3) performance area, which had a stage, a small orchestra pit, a mixing board and another bar; and 4) a loft, reachable by stairs and served as a kind of opium den where Chinese junkies slept on thin mats and dreamt of sampans stuffed with crabs that clacked their claws to the beat of "Get Down On It (Get Your Backs Up Off the Wall)"

There was a large man who sat at a stool barring entrance to the performance area. Our first conversation went something like this.

any of his own): I'm on the list.

Him: Oh.

[Stamps hand.]

Me: This is my guest. She's on the list.

Him: Which list?

Me: The one you don't have.

Him: Oh.

[Stamps hand.]

I walked around, got to know the essential personnel (the soundman, the bartender, the booker, the performers, the long-fingered gnome with the spiked club) and generally engaged the performers and professionals in a professional and engaging manner so that when the people in charge asked if I needed any-

manlike behavior for which they would be flogged (pronouncing poem with two syllables, wearing socks with sandals, etc.) Interestingly, this latter rule bothered a good many of my new acquaintances, and I passed the buck back to David Foster Wallace, no stranger to inappropriate headgear, whom I copped it from.

The first band was called Vinnie's Tampon Case. They were a self-professed cross between a rock and roll band and a school play. The performance involved a guitar player dressed as a tree, a singer dressed as a hunter, a cardboard horse and the narrator named Vinnie. The set consisted of two songs, a story in two acts. A hunter walks into a wood. She is forlorn. There are bears in the woods and she is nervous because she doesn't have a tampon case. But then someone does bring her a tampon case, made by Vinnie (duh) and she is happy again. The end. After the set I told Vinnie's brother, whom I'd mistaken for Vinnie, how much I enjoyed the set. Where was Vinnie? Selling tampon cases (again: duh).

I went up on stage and read a short story whose central conceit is that it is told from the point of view of

Popeye the sailor's bastard, who stabs his father in the eye in a low class of brothel in Haiphong. I got off the stage and let Lefty's Deceiver do their thing. They played a loud, energetic set that brought to mind mid- to late-'90s Superchunk before they went all shoe gazer. The bartender bought me a beer because I "had to read and stuff."

Many writers who had read at the Philadelphia Free Library earlier that evening were assembled in the pool room drinking and talking with people who'd come to see them read. It was very egalitarian and the writers that I talked to were approachable and arresting. It started to become clear that the festival had split into two festivals, one rock and roll, and one literary, and there was several noisy speaker cabinets and a former Ukrainian fisherman that kept them apart. (This is a gross oversimplification. Everyone knows festival division has seven discrete stages, including but not limited to Mitosis, Halitosis and Met him pike hoses.)

For my next reading, I had brought numerous highlighted copies of a short story about a love triangle involving a man named Dan, his girlfriend Susie, and Dan's best

friend who is sleeping with Susie. An off-duty bartender volunteered to play Dan. Aside from some griping about not having enough lines, the actors acquitted themselves admirably. But the real star was bartender Dan. He got into his role, which included violent spasms and jerks. He was so good it would not surprise me if some of the people in the audience thought he was a ringer, a professional actor, or perhaps even a robot. He was awesome. Later, we got into an argument over who was going to pay for the shots, which is the best kind of argument to have with an off-duty bartender.

One of the rules of being an emcee is that implications that the audience is somehow affiliated with local neo-Nazi movements are to be avoided. This is a rule I have never found much use for and promptly broke it while introducing Jim Roll, who probably wishes I hadn't. I retired to the loft with a three-hundred-pound Chinese drug lord, who was known to ride around town on a moped, and smoked opium with several of his concubines while the drug lord heckled the drummer between songs. I briefly considered selling some of my new friends into slavery, but went downstairs and

bought them beers instead.

The buzz from the back of the room by the bar, which had been audible all night, grew considerably louder. The performance area was packed with people. They were ready for the headliners, Bigger Lovers. I read a super short piece, made a few half-hearted attempts to provoke the audience, received a few half-hearted heckles, and relinquished the stage for the night.

At the bar, my new friends brought me celebratory shots, which we drank from tin cups brought back from Sir Ernest Henry Shackleton's Transantarctic Expedition. We ate dried strips of caribou meat and stuffed hardtack down one another's pants for the sheer thrill of it. One by one we shuffled out the door and tumbled into cabs or climbed aboard scooters adorned with "\$60 a quarter-ounce is a crime" stickers. Black-hatted figures clutching brooms shot into the sky. There was a strange sound coming from the naval yard and I could smell the sulfurous smell of ancient bird guano. My run in Philly was up. It was time to get back to L.A.

-Money



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Rich Mackin

The Twisted Balloon

Bike helmets have got to be the stupidest looking things on the planet, arguably after faux hawks and Carrot Top.

For years, Todd has been trying to get me to write a column about polyamory or food ingredients. He almost got one this issue, but last minute decisions cause me to write about bikes instead.

I just finished a book on Critical Mass (a monthly bike ride, traditionally on the last Friday of the month, during the evening commute. See my book review this issue for more details) and was too sick to ride in the NYC Critical Mass on Buy Nothing Day. (At the time I was in Norwalk, located in the penis tip of Connecticut, almost in NYC, for Thanksgiving. A lesson to those who don't eat a lot of dairy — ask your crazy relatives if they loaded up potatoes with sour cream before eating.) So, I have all this bike energy pent up that I doubt would be satisfied with a ride in the 20-degree Boston weather, so I write instead.

An old roommate once noted the trend of bike punks getting huge in the area and asked where all the bikes were last year? Were all the bikes in garages getting lonely? His wording was mostly in reference to his belief that these kids wouldn't still be biking as much in a year. (Indeed, the kid who got "bike punx" tattooed on his knuckles started the laser removal before a year passed, but then again, this is someone who lectured me on straight edge over the summer and was drunk off a 40 last week.)

But, for all my roommate's pointed mockery, he failed to see the logic of the bike as a punk accessory. While most bikes are the products of corporations, the companies that make bikes are less likely to be tied with crime and pollution or Hitler (see Retodd's article on noted Nazi-supporter and anti-Semite Henry Ford in issue #7) and riding a bike doesn't require gas from any of George Bush's friends' companies. A bike is metal, tough, can be maintained yourself with some minimal skills and training, and can easily be personalized. Bikes can be cheap for the poor, expensive for the Hot Topic trust

from scratch for the truly DIY punks. If not totally built from scratch, bicycles are easily chopped and remade into works of art with pedals, and such work is not as scrutinized by the state as a car would be (and with good reason, since bikes also don't have polluting emissions.)

So, here are some random thoughts on bikes...

Art and Protest Bikes

The art bike is easier than the art car in that you can add temporary decorations without as much concern of them flying off when driving. (And if they do, you can more easily turn around and get them.) Unlike dressing in costume as a pedestrian, an art bike allows some detachment (you aren't a freak, you are a person with a freaky bike) and easy getaway if you live somewhere with a lot of frat boys or rednecks who disapprove of signs of creativity. Bikes are easily painted for the novice, and can have any number of wings, attachments, or even outer shells created for them. For those that don't want a major production, simple decorations, such as a sign in the front of the handlebar (where the number would be on a BMX bike) are easily added. My friend Kelly mounted a plastic skull in the center, so the handlebars gave the appearance of horns. A luggage rack (useful on its own right) makes for a good sign mount or flagpole holder. I have a few flags (pirate, corporate America) on light wood poles that easily affix to the angled rear frame of my bike's rack. This allows an angled display, which keeps the flag away from me and the wheels, and also lets the flag hang down, making a nice flag wave as I ride. Going to a protest? Why hold a sign when you can have a rolling mini billboard? Not going to a protest? Why not state something anyway as you ride to work, school, or wherever? Again, the ride-by aspect of the bike allows for a sense of commotion and yet anonymity. You are seen and are gone, optimal for times you

want to make a statement and not stick around to answer follow up questions or get beat up.

Bike Locks

If you have a bike, get a lock, then lock your bike. Ideally, you lock your bike by having the lock go through a wheel, the bike, and something that is attached to the ground or a building. This is an important point — I saw someone lock a bike frame to a four-foot-tall signpost with the sign no longer attached. If I wanted to, I could have easily lifted the bike and ridden away on it, the only function of the lock being an annoying noise as it clanged to the frame. If you have things like easily removable wheels or detachable seat, lock them, too. I mean, sure, you know your area better than I do, so maybe you don't need to do all this, but as a whole, I find that in most cities, thirty seconds of bike lock time is worth however long it might take to carry a bike with one wheel home. If you can't lock the bike to something like a signpost or fence (or in utopias such as Minneapolis, a bike rack) at least lock the wheel to the bike. Someone could still carry it off if they really wanted, but at least they can't ride it off. An unlocked bike is not just something to steal, it's providing the thief with a getaway vehicle. This would be like leaving your car keys in your car door. (Or repeatedly leaving your friend's keys in his car door, which is partially why I don't bring a certain person on tours any more. Also, make your bike look either personal or crappy — decorate it with stickers, whatever. Nothing appeals to a bike thief more than a nice, new, perfect bike. Especially if you are dumb enough to have a lock mounted to your bike that you didn't use. I know people who have stolen unlocked bikes with locks still in the mounts, just on principle.

Helmets

Bike helmets have got to be the stupidest looking things on the planet, arguably after faux hawks

and Carrot Top. Riding without a helmet looks cooler, but getting brain damage tends to make you look not so cool, so a good compromise is a skate helmet. Football and other helmets not only work, but also add that thrift store mismatched fashion the kids are into. Just make sure that you consider to protect the parts of your head most likely to smash into something, and also don't decorate in ways that defeat the purpose — i.e. drilling holes that allow the helmet to crack, or use paints and glues that affect the chemistry of the thing.

Bike Riding Tips from Your Friendly Dictator

Bikes are vehicles. This means they are traffic. This means they belong on the street. On one level, this means that people driving cars will have to deal. I am not saying don't take up more room than you need to thwart cars, nor am I saying to disregard the physics of a car-on-bike collision. But you have as much right to drive your vehicle as the motorist, unless there is signage saying otherwise. On another level, I am saying that sidewalks are called sidewalks for a reason. Sure, in some parts of Boston, the sidewalk is the size of the street, except one has lots of fast cars and one has a few slow pedestrians, so the cyclist usually chooses safety and sanity over technicality, but as a whole, riding your bike on the sidewalk is just being a jerk. Use your judgement, but consider if your biking is worth annoying everyone else. At least, if you need to be on the sidewalk, consider that maybe you can coast more and not have to pedal at breakneck speeds.

Bike Law

One thing that is fun about riding in Critical Masses is finding out how little cops know about bike laws when they stop you. The problem is, this is only funny if they just stop you and let you go. This is less funny when they take you in. Please always remember, just

because a cop does not have the legal right to arrest you does not mean they don't have the physical ability to try. All the zine-read "what to do when a cop talks to you" material does nothing when it comes down to a cop WANTING to arrest or otherwise annoy you. One good defense is to learn local law regarding bikes and print that info out. One friend even made cards with this to give out in just such a situation.

Bikes as a Statement

Well, I don't know how much of a statement this is, but once, when I was working for a cushy white collar job, our company won a bunch of things and rented out a room in a fancy pants nightclub. I must admit that it was fun watching all the people paying for valet parking, confused to see me pull up in my bike, cardboard box duct taped to the rack, no less, and walk in. I am also the type of guy who always goes for the "other" category on surveys, filling in my bike description if something calls for a car. (Yes, I know I have a car, too. Hey, at least I am not one of those people who has a "one less car" shirt when I ride even though they have a car; it's just not being used. That's like saying you are vegetarian because you aren't eating meat at the moment.)

Bikes Where You Don't Expect Them

I have bikes AND I have a car. Therefore, I have a bike rack on my car. I find this great when traveling. As much as I dislike car culture and sprawl, my car can get me from Boston to DC in a day and a bike can't. And for the price of one train ticket, I can get gas money to drive a few people all that way, and their too heavy to carry stuff, and their bikes. Aha, then, when we get into DC, we can park and ride bikes around! Bikes are great travel accessories - park your car in most major urban areas and see if you want to get back in it and look for another parking space every time you go somewhere. Or take public transportation... now how are you going to get around? Spend lots of money on taxis and busses? (Well, or walk, I guess.) But if you have a

bike with you, you can explore faster than by walking, get around without parking again and again (and paying again and again as some cities would have you do) and if you make a wrong turn, you can much more easily correct the situation than with a car. (Ever get lost in Boston? Make a wrong turn and the maze of one ways escorts you to a totally new part of town.)

I have brought bikes with me to large protest marches and the difference in the experience is amazing. With all my heavy stuff on the saddle or rack, I have a sign mounted - I am unencumbered (well, except for the bike I have to push.) If I want to see if I know anyone else at the march, I can much more

happy. One word of warning - folding bikes tend to be far less maneuverable and harder on your ass for longer rides.

Critical Mass as a Microcosm of Why Anarchy Won't Work Just Yet

Most cities by now have a Critical Mass. It could be big, it could be small. It could last a long time or a short time. It might have blatant political messages or just be a bunch of people riding together. Once it is decided somehow that it will meet at X time at X place, it is generally without any other signs of leadership or pre-decided deci-

tion, etc.) and try to influence towards their ideals, only to grow cynical by lack of change, or even change in the opposite direction. In Critical Mass sense, one recurring theme is the "angry young white males" (which they usually are) or "testosterone brigades" that are unfriendly and aggressive and see the ride as anti-car, as opposed to simply pro-bike. To these types, the ride is an excuse or chance to harass drivers, perhaps because they ordinarily feel harassed. These riders are generally the minority, but they are a very visible and outspoken group, and so seem to represent the entire group. The problem is that the bulk of the group has little in the way to show otherwise besides riding without conflict.

So, many more peaceful riders are tempted to ride next to the provocateurs, uncomfortable with the idea of talking about the subject, and so merely posting about it on chat groups the next day, or perhaps by merely not showing up again. What this means though, is that the peaceful majority dwindles thus fulfilling the prophecy that the troublemakers are the spokesmen for the group, because soon they are the majority, if not the only ones left.

This is something

I never understand. It is essentially saying "I don't like the way you do things, so I will let you do them without voicing my opinion or providing any counter point."

This is a sad point to be made from someone with a patch saying "My bike takes me places school never could," and it's one reason that I DO try to ride in as many masses as I can (and contribute to publications, vote, go to meetings, etc.) because I subscribe to the "if I don't care, why should anyone care?" school of thought. If I don't want Critical Mass to be viewed as a bunch of hooligans, I should be there to act not like a hooligan, and to ask the hooligans why they are acting that way. Affecting change isn't easy... I suppose if it was, it wouldn't be change. Of course, then again, having fun takes energy too.

Just like riding a bike.

-Rich Mackin

Rich Mackin

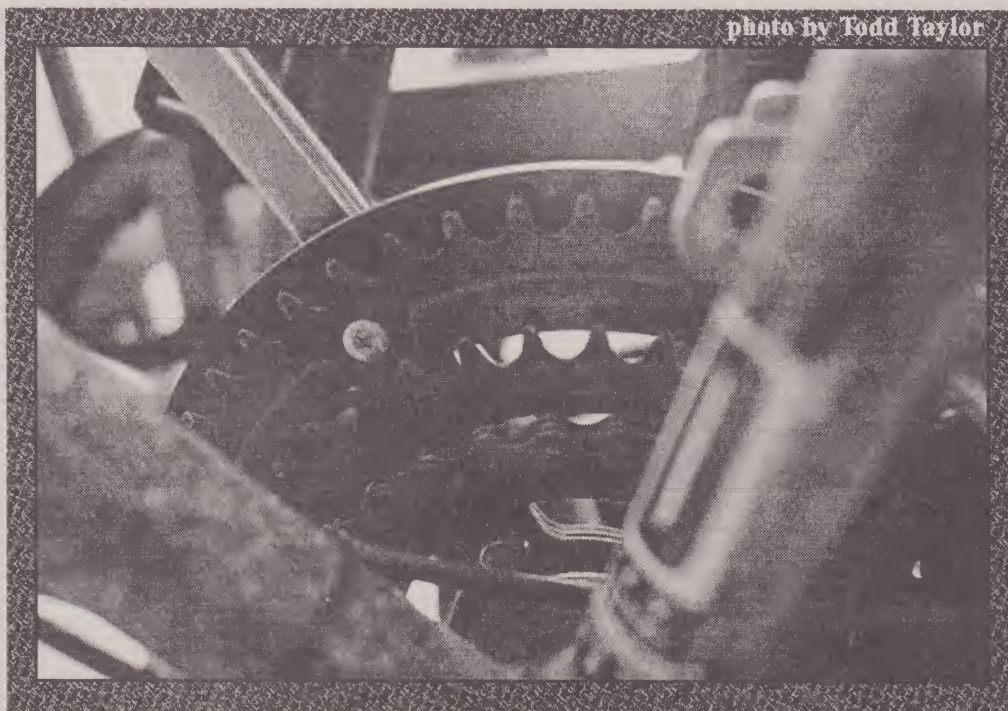


photo by Todd Taylor

easily ride up and down - or even ride to the beginning and watch the whole thing pass. Bathroom break? Ride off a few blocks and return before the march is too far to track down.

Be prepared. If you ride a bike somewhere that people know isn't your hometown, they will assume you biked all the way there.

Don't have a bike rack? Don't want to lug a bike on a train? Consider a folding bike? There are a few kinds out there. Some look like tiny bikes with long handlebar and saddle stems. I have a Strida (www.strida.com). A Strida is fair-priced for a new bike device that is lightweight and folds up into about a 45" x 20" x 11" space and can be rolled when folded. When in bike mode, it looks like a triangle with wheels, a handlebar, a seat and peddles. Heck, even if I never traveled with it, it's a mobile work of art and just plain makes people

sion making. One of the best parts of Critical Mass is the lack of any official organization. Of course, one of the worst parts of Critical Mass is the lack of any official organization. To say that there is no leader is never really true. Like in many social situations, the lack of an official leadership does not mean that some people will not take control, or at least attempt to. Others will willingly follow. Still others may not willingly follow, but will either go along for lack of reason not to (i.e., not wanting to go a proposed route, but having no other route to propose) or because they become passive. These are often the people who complain about things, perhaps even drop out of the ride/scene/society without doing anything to improve that.

Of course, this is a simplification. Some people ride in a Critical Mass every month (or go to every punk show, or vote in every elec-



Sean Carswell

A Monkey to Ride the Dog



...the biggest and toughest have only remained that way for a very short time, and they've always fallen.

About Carpenters and War

Ralph Tanner was a legend in my hometown because, basically, he could kick anyone's ass. I was always hearing stories about Ralph getting in scraps and busting someone up, and the stories were always the same: Ralph was just hanging out, minding his own business when some tough guy came up to him, out of the blue, and egged on Ralph and egged him on and wouldn't let up until Ralph finally had no choice but to settle it. Listening to the stories was kind of like listening to the nightly news explain the latest US military invasion. In both cases, I always figured that there was more to the stories. Something that I wasn't being told.

Then, I witnessed a Ralph Tanner brawl one night at Spanky's Pub.

I wish the place wasn't really called Spanky's, because it makes it sound like I'm making this story up. Like I'm trying to make a metaphor out of all of this. But it's true. There's really a Spanky's. It's on Banana River Drive in Merritt Island, Florida, right across from a Napa Auto Parts store, in the same building as Hobb's Drugs, around the corner from the Inner Room Cabaret. If you're ever in Merritt Island and looking to get your ass kicked — either by a drunk redneck, a pool shark who's missing two fingers on her left hand, or the gnarly tap beer — Spanky's is the place. I made fun of people who went to Spanky's when I was in high school, but a few years later, when I was out of college and making my living as a framing carpenter, I used to hang out at Spanky's a lot.

One night, back in those days, I'd been hanging out with some friends at the Inner Room and blowing way too much of my paycheck, so I walked around the corner to Spanky's. I figured I could get a beer there for half the price of one at the Inner Room, and I could probably find someone there who would drink with me until I was ready to go home. And I did find someone to drink with: Ralph Tanner.

Ralph was a framing carpenter back then, too. Just like me, he'd busted his ass all week under the hot Florida sun, got paid earlier that day, and was out to blow off some steam. I belted up to the bar next to Ralph, ordered a beer for me and a shot for both of us, and asked Ralph what he was up to. He talked a bit about work and I talked a bit about work. We drank our shots and drank our beers and Ralph bought the next round. We talked about the things that framers in Florida talk about: clueless homeowners and underpaying bosses and how quickly we could sheet a roof and how hot it was on that roof once afternoon rolled around.

Basically, boring stuff to talk

about unless you had someone to empathize with you. But we weren't complaining and we weren't talking about macho or violent stuff and we weren't talking to anyone else in the bar. Just drinking beers and minding our own business. And that's when it happened.

Ralph lifted his glass of beer to his mouth. Just when it got about six inches from his face, a stranger popped Ralph in the back of the head. Ralph's head flew forward, and his teeth banged into the lip of the pint glass. Even in the crowded bar, with the roar of drunks talking and the jukebox fighting to play above the noise, I could hear the clink of teeth on glass. Ralph turned to face me. He looked as surprised as I felt. "Jesus, Sean, what'd you do that for?" he said.

"I did it, motherfucker," the stranger said.

Ralph turned on his barstool. "Do I know you?" he asked.

"You don't remember me, do you, jackass?" the stranger said. Ralph said that he didn't. The stranger explained to Ralph that Ralph had thrown him out of a strip club a few months earlier. Ralph didn't remember, but apologized anyway. The stranger didn't accept the apology and called Ralph a "motherfucker" again and got more and more aggressive until finally he grabbed Ralph's t-shirt and slammed him against the bar. Ralph popped up and slammed a right hook into the side of the stranger's face. The hook knocked the guy senseless, and he probably would've dropped if Ralph hadn't swung a left into the stranger's ribs, which stopped the momentum of the fall. From there, things just got worse for the guy. Ralph threw a barrage of punches, so hard and so fast the stranger didn't stand a chance.

I was way too close to the fight and didn't want any part of it. I grabbed my beer and took a couple of steps back through the gathering crowd. I emptied my pint and set it on the edge of a pool table. No one was playing, anyway. Everyone in the bar was gathered around the fight. I slipped out the side door and headed out into the night, figuring that anywhere was better than Spanky's.

The next Monday at the job site, I told my Ralph Tanner story to a fellow carpenter named Billy. Billy had a similar Ralph Tanner story; the only difference being that, truth be told in Billy's story, Ralph kinda picked the fight. My brother, who was also on the carpentry crew and had been friends with Ralph since they were both kids, told his Ralph Tanner stories. Telling and hearing the stories made me feel sorry for Ralph. I walked out to the stack of trusses, wanting to work by myself. I pulled the gable truss out of the stack, dragged it to a flat spot on the

lot, grabbed a few sheets of plywood, and got to work sheeting the gable. As I did this, I thought about Ralph, and remembered the only other time I'd seen him fight. It was when we were kids. I was nine years old, and hanging out at the mall with Ralph's younger brother, Bobby. Bobby and I had bought a sack of Big League Chew. We stuffed our faces with huge chunks of gum. When the gum was good and soft, we placed it in a well-trafficked-but-inconspicuous place in the mall, found a bench, and watched the shoppers walk by and get huge gobs of gum stuck to their shoes. This was big fun for Bobby and me. About as fun as life gets for a nine-year-old. Ralph came up to our mall bench while Bobby and I were doing this. He asked us what we were giggling about, and we let Ralph in on our scheme. Ralph said, "That's just not right. Bobby, go pick up your gum." Before Bobby could get up, some kid stepped in the gum. The kid got pissed off and he saw Bobby and me giggling and the pack of Big League Chew. He came over to us and I could tell he wanted to fight, but he was probably fourteen or fifteen, and we were just too young to beat up. Ralph was twelve at the time, though, so the angry kid could fight Ralph. He talked some shit and ended up kicking Ralph in the shin. Ralph jumped up and busted open the angry kid's nose. He probably would've done a lot worse if the mall security guard hadn't been there.

So I hammered away at the gable that Monday morning and thought about Ralph's fight in the mall a dozen years earlier, and I thought about Ralph's fight that past Friday night and thought, nothing really changes for the poor guy. Though things did change. When he was twelve, Ralph was just a skinny kid. An easy target for bullies. A dangerous one to pick on, but someone who could still be stopped by a security guard or a teacher or any adult who happened to be nearby. By the time Ralph was sixteen, he was a Golden Gloves boxer, the top of his weight class in the state of Florida, but still a skinny kid. By the time he was eighteen, he was done with boxing, on steroids and fighting all the time. He kept working out and he kept taking steroids and kept getting bigger, and the bigger he got, the more he had to fight. The more he had to fight, the better he got at it, and the better he got at it, the more he had to fight. He worked as a bouncer at night clubs until he got big and tough enough to work as a bouncer at strip clubs and kept doing that until he got stabbed one night. At that point, a friend of his hired him onto a construction crew, mostly because Ralph was big and could lift a lot, and that's all you need to start out as a framer. But building houses in Florida is a hot and miserable

job, so Ralph would alternate between that and bouncing, between the slow, grinding death of construction work and the risk of the fast, violent death of manhandling out-of-control drunks. And all through it, he had to fight.

While I finished sheeting the first gable and started digging through the stacks of trusses for the second gable, I thought about the stranger who felt like he had to fight Ralph. I figured that the real reason the stranger wanted to fight Ralph was this: Ralph was the biggest and the best. Ralph was huge, young, strong, fit. No one had taken him down yet. It just stood to reason, in the stranger's head, that someone needed to, even if for no better reason than beating up the toughest guy in town makes you the toughest guy in town. I thought to myself, it's so fucking meaningless. I wondered if Ralph had known that this was going to happen when he fought that kid over bubble gum on the shoe, or if Ralph had known when he was a Golden Gloves boxer, or if he even knew now. If he knew every time he lifted a weight bar off his chest or every time he jabbed a steroid needle into his leg to start another cycle that he was dooming himself to a life of barroom brawls, bloody fists, teeth chipped on pint glasses, the occasional stabbing.

A week later, I gave my mom a ride home from work because her car was in the shop. On the way to her house, she asked me to stop by a grocery store, and I did. While we walked down the bread aisle, I heard someone say, "Hey, Mrs. Carswell."

My mom turned and said, "Hi, Ralphie." I almost forgot to say hi to Ralph too, because I was laughing that my mom had just called the toughest guy in town "Ralphie." She'd been his second grade teacher, and she had the habit of thinking of her former students as perpetual children. In my mom's eyes, this big, powerful framer in front of her was still a skinny little seven-year-old trying to learn his times tables. She asked Ralph how he was and what he'd been up to and Ralph answered her. Then, she went back to her shopping. I stayed back to talk to Ralph.

"Sorry I left you on your own at Spanky's the other night," I said. "You make out all right?"

Ralph shook his head. "No. I got completely fucked."

This surprised me. I knew that there was no way that the stranger could've come back on Ralph. The stranger's ass was pretty well kicked when I left. And I didn't think the stranger had any friends with him, or else one of them would've jumped me. But I got out of there untouched. "What happened?" I asked.

"Apparently, I broke the guy's eye socket. He had to have his whole face reconstructed."

"Holy shit."

"Yeah, that's not the worst of it. His lawyer told me that the surgery cost twenty thousand dollars."

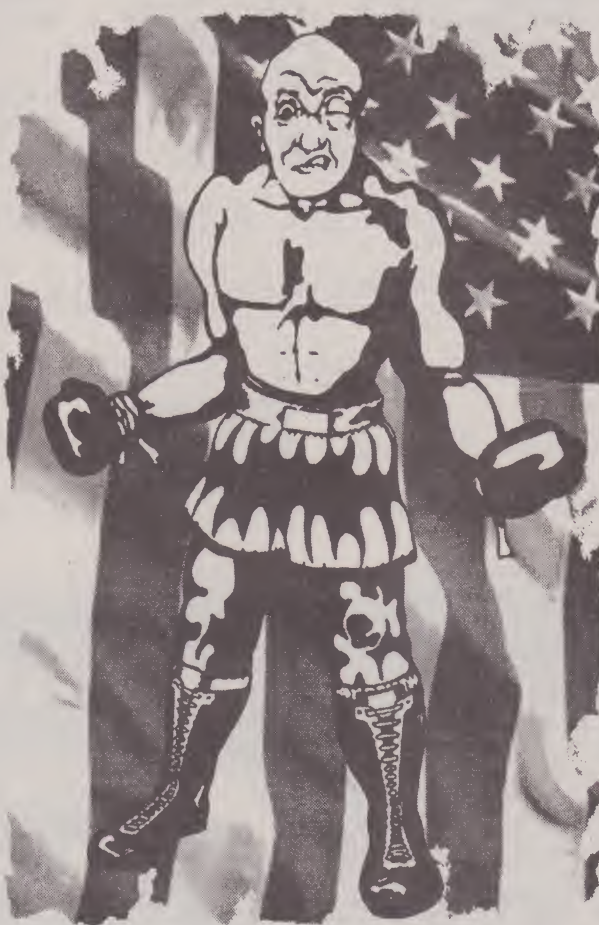
"He's suing you?"

Ralph nodded. "He's suing me." He glanced down the bread aisle to make sure that my mom was out of earshot, then asked, "You still working with Billy?" I said that I was. Ralph said, "Tell him I got juice for him if he wants to go on another cycle."

I said I'd pass on the message, but I was lying. If Ralph wanted to sell steroids to pay for a lawyer to defend him, that was Ralph's business. If Billy wanted to go on another cycle, get

way bigger than he needed to be, and become an irritable, impossible-to-work-with bastard, that was Billy's business. But I wasn't gonna be a part of it. I said good-bye to Ralph and caught up with my mom in time to carry her shopping basket.

I haven't seen Ralph for several years now. I quit working construction and moved out of town long before his case went to trial. I don't know what happened with the lawsuit or if he's still getting into fights every weekend. I don't know if anyone ever finally beat Ralph down. I assume someone did, but I don't have anything to base that assumption on. I may just be a pessimist.



The Boxer by Tom Wrenn

I still think of Ralph Tanner often, though, because understanding Ralph helps me to understand the US government's drive to be a military superpower. In a lot of ways, Ralph and all the guys he fought against have a lot in common with the US government. It's not something that's easy to see, and this story isn't supposed to be a parable, where you read up to this point and say, "Okay. I see. We look at Ralph with all his steroids and weightlifting and think, does anyone really need to be that big? Then, we look at the US military and think, does any military need to be that big?" It's far more complex than that.

Still, I grew up on construction sites. I learned to see the world through that perspective. I came to understand the patterns of human behavior by looking at the carpenters and painters and concrete masons I worked for, and applying their actions to humanity as a whole. So, in my mind, the US military is Ralph

Tanner. You don't have to see things this way. Perhaps your dad was a stockbroker, and you see the world through a stockbroker's eyes. If that's the case, maybe you see the US military as AOL/Time Warner stock: something so big and bloated and top heavy that it's bound to crumble any day now. Perhaps you grew up watching sci-fi movies and you see the world through sci-fi eyes. If that's the case, maybe you see the US military as the *Star Wars* movies: way too much money is being spent on them, you get the feeling that they're all about marketing and advertisement, and, lately, you kinda wish the armies would all just kill each other and get it over with. Perhaps you grew up in a nice, suburban neighborhood and you see the world through

nice, suburban eyes. If that's the case, feel free to use your own metaphor. Use pro-wrestling. Use Mohammed Ali. Use the pimply kid who'd always ruin the neighborhood soccer games by saying, "It's my ball and if you don't play by my rules, I'm taking it and going home." Really, you can use whatever example you want. But it's important to keep in mind that we tend to view larger issues — issues of nations and societies — through smaller examples of humans behaving in similar patterns. We break the complex down into its simplest terms, and this helps us to understand things. So let's look at Ralph Tanner, in the simplest terms, and try to understand this big, complex problem.

First, let's look at the most readily-apparent things.

One: Ralph Tanner probably wasn't wise to be the biggest and toughest in town because the biggest and toughest always fall sooner or later. And they fall the hardest because they're the hardest to take down. If you're a weak little

guy, you generally get your ass beat by someone who's not much bigger than you. It only takes a few punches to knock you down, so you only have to withstand a few punches. When you're a monster the size of Ralph, though, it takes a bigger monster to beat you. So, by proportion alone, you have to withstand a much more brutal beating. It's simple physics. By the same token, how wise is it for the US military to try to be the biggest and toughest in the world? Because, historically speaking, the countries that have tried to be the biggest and toughest have always fallen, and the people in that country — much more so than the governments themselves — were always the worst for the fall. Take, for instance, the people of Russia who are still trying to fend off civil war and rebuild their economy more than a decade after the Soviet Union fell. Or read a book about the German people in 1945 and you'll find that most Germans didn't eat that year (and you'll never get used to

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stories of little boys selling their sisters for a potato). Or ask someone who lived around Ground Zero in Nagasaki on August 6, 1945 how much he appreciated the Japanese army's attempt to take over China, the Philippines, Hawaii, etc.; though, sadly, no one who lived around Ground Zero in Nagasaki on August 6, 1945 lived to talk about it. The point is this: throughout history, the biggest and toughest have only remained that way for a very short time, and they've always fallen. This doesn't necessarily mean that they always *will* fall. It just means that they always *have* fallen. That's why now is a good time to wonder if it's wise for the US to keep expanding as a military superpower.

Two: no matter how strong you are, you are vulnerable somewhere. Like I said, Ralph Tanner got stabbed one night. No one could beat Ralph in a fistfight, but there's more than one way to fight, and fighting, by its very nature, isn't fair. Someone can always pull out a knife or a gun or bring friends or jump you when you least expect it. And it sucks if they do, but fists can't stop that. By the same token, you can put a missile defense system into space. You can build nuclear bombs and nuclear subs and stealth bombers and SCUD missiles and depleted uranium missiles. You can attack Afghanistan and Iraq and Sudan and Yugoslavia and Somalia. You can install military dictatorships in half the countries in Central America. You can give Columbia billions of dollars to fight a "drug war." You can spend over \$300,000,000,000 annually on the military budget. You can place army bases and soldiers in so many places in the world that you're safely positioned to fight a battle anywhere at any time. In fact, the US has done all of these things. But there are more ways to fight than any military could possibly foresee. All of the United States' military power couldn't keep two airplanes from flying into the World Trade Center. What's keeping something similar, or worse, from happening again?

Three: you can't say that Ralph Tanner was innocent that night at Spanky's. I mean, I like the guy. I'd like to say that he was just hanging out with me, doing the exact same things that I was doing, but, in all fairness, that's not true. He was posing a threat, and I wasn't. Here's why: he went to a bar that's famous for all its fights, he went there knowing that people he'd beat up in the past were probably going to be there looking for a fight, he'd established himself as a fighter, and that invites violence. So he didn't pick that particular fight. It's true. But his presence itself was threatening, and his presence at a bar like Spanky's was a provocation. It's like when US fighter planes fly over a country again and again and again, occasionally dropping bombs. If you're a pilot in a US fighter plane, and you get shot at, it sucks, but it's hard to blame the other country's military for shooting at you. They don't know if you have a bomb in your plane or not. They do know that at other times, other planes just like yours have bombed them. That makes your plane a serious threat to them. It makes your presence a provocation.

Four: Ralph should've learned a very basic lesson from me that night. The lesson is this: if you stay out of fights to begin with, you'll get hurt a lot less often. I mean, I don't want to be anyone's paradigm of hope, but remember that I didn't get into the fight that night at Spanky's. I turned and walked away. I didn't protect myself

because I didn't have to. No one thought to fight me because I didn't pose a threat to anyone. I was exactly as big and strong as I needed to be to keep someone from taking a cheap shot at me, but not nearly as big and strong as I would've needed to be to make someone think they had something to gain by attacking me. And, in the global arena, I wish the US could say the same things. It goes back to what Howard Zinn said when we interviewed him for *Razorcake* a few issues back, "Sweden is not worried about terrorism. New Zealand is not worried about terrorism. Holland is not worried about terrorism." If you don't pose a threat, you don't have to fight. It's usually that simple.

Five: it's generally a good idea to ask what is gained by a fight. Ralph Tanner beat up that guy in Spanky's. What did it get him? Was his

...you'll never get used to stories of little boys selling their sisters for a potato

life improved in any way by beating up a stranger? I doubt it. It's hard to say that any of Ralph's fights made his life better. It goes back to a lesson most kids learn at a very young age. They get their first black eyes or swollen knuckles, they ask themselves what it got them, and they learn to resolve their problems through other means. But most kids always ask themselves that question: what did it get me? So why do nations rarely ask this question? The US attacked Iraq in 1991, supposedly because Saddam Hussein was a madman who had to be taken out of power. So the US bombed Iraq, destroying cities, schools, hospitals, and a few military targets. They killed hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. And the US won the war. But Saddam Hussein wasn't relieved of his power. So what was the point?

What about Vietnam? The US entered the Vietnam War because they feared that, if Vietnam became a communist country, then the communism would spread through the rest of southeast Asia, then onward to the rest of the world. And Vietnam won that war. They became a communist country. And communism didn't spread throughout southeast Asia, and it definitely didn't spread onward to the rest of the world. So what was the Vietnam War all about? And, now that the war on drugs seems to have subsided and the war on terrorism — in Afghanistan, anyway — seems to be winding down, is the world free of drugs and terror finally? Is that even a realistic hope? Haven't most wars *increased* drug use? If terrorism means using violence, fear, and intimidation to achieve certain ends, isn't war itself terrorism?

I'm probably not saying anything here that you haven't thought before. Most of us reading this magazine already know that a bigger military doesn't lead to more security. It leads to less. So the next question to ask is this: how does a country actively stop being a superpower? Well, the US could get out of the superpower business the way that Hitler's Germany, Hirohito's Japan, and Napoleon's France did it: keep fighting until you lose everything. This seems to be the plan that the US is going with right now. But couldn't we take a different approach?

Remember that I don't know what happened to Ralph Tanner, so let's make an optimistic guess. Let's say that Ralph didn't finally get

beaten down. Let's hope that he just learned to stop fighting. He stopped taking steroids. He shrunk down to a normal size. He stopped spending time in places like Spanky's. He started working on his mind, instead. He turned his efforts towards educating himself. He worked his way up from a carpenter's assistant. Maybe he even helped to start a carpenters' union, so that he and his coworkers could have things that everyone should have: health benefits, eight-hour days, paid vacations, a reasonable share of the wealth that his labor generates. It could happen, right? It sure beats busting out some



stranger's eye socket at Spanky's and getting stuck with a \$20,000 medical bill.

Doesn't the US have the same choice? Couldn't the government stop spending hundreds of billions of dollars annually on the military? Couldn't the US shrink the armed forces down to a reasonable size; say, only as big as they need to be to protect US borders, and no bigger? We, as a country, could even use those extra hundreds of billions of dollars (that no longer need to be spent on the military) on educating the people of this country, on providing free health care for everyone who lives here. It could happen, right?

I'll agree that all of this may seem like a simplified way of examining these issues. Maybe it is. But human beings act according to basic patterns of behavior. Society and governments are little more than clumps of humans acting along those same basic patterns. And as the US bullies itself into another war, it helps to remember these basic patterns. Because it is good to look at the individual reasons people give to fight or not to fight a war. It's good to look at the impending war in Iraq and say, "Isn't it foolish to spend \$90 billion to fight a war for \$19 billion worth of oil?" or "Isn't it foolish to attack a country solely because they *might* someday have nuclear weapons?" or "Isn't it foolish to fight a war to prevent the *possibility* of Iraq having nuclear weapons when Pakistan already has nuclear weapons, and the US attacking Iraq dramatically increases the *probability* of Pakistan using them on the US?" Or whatever sides of the debate you choose to look at. It's good to look at all these reasons why each individual attack on a foreign country is bad. But it's also important to remember the bigger mistake the United States is making, which is being a military superpower. It's the exact same basic pattern as taking steroids so you can be the toughest carpenter at Spanky's. As humans and as a nation, isn't it time to move beyond that?

—Sean Carswell

Sean Carswell



Maddy

Shiftless When Idle

BOTTLES ARE FOR BOURGEOIS LOSERS!

Alright, it's 2003! Par-tee! Another year of over-consumption of cereal (if there could be such a thing), drunken bike rides, rocking out to Against Me!, and bein' broke! Punk fucking rock!

And, in the grand tradition of the one of the greatest punk rock writers of all time (Rev. Nørb!), I'd like to present to you: My Top Ten List! However, lest I infringe on Nørb's copyright, and thus end up in a lengthy lawsuit that results in the forfeiture of all my leopard print underwear, I must change the rules, dude!

So, instead of a Top Ten Records of the Year (and who am I kidding, I've been unable to

is less attractive than cynicism!

Note: All are in no particular order. I am a geek; but I have my limits!

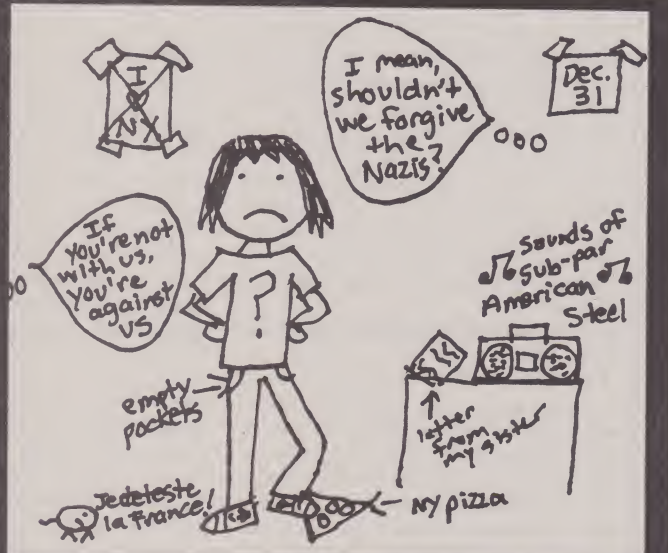
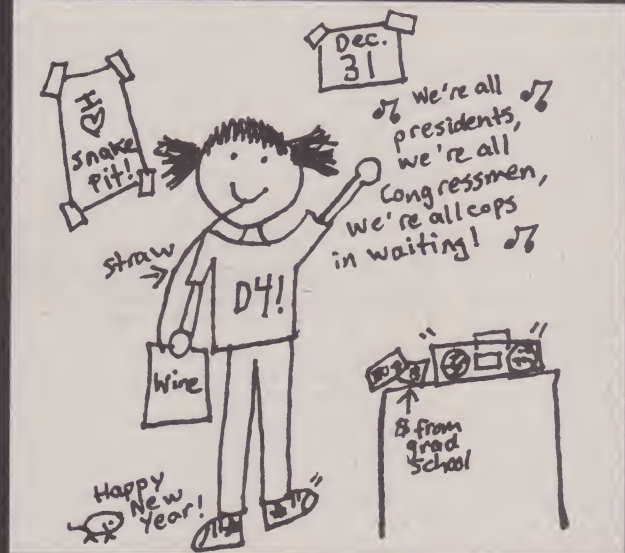
TOP TEN MOST PUNK ROCK THINGS

1. Boxed Wine! What was I doing with my life before? For ten bucks, you get a seemingly endless display of mirth-inducing entertainment! And you can take it out of the box, stick the plastic bag o' wine in your backpack, walk or bike around town, and par-tee! Portable insanity! Why would you ever drink wine out of a bottle again? Bottles are for bourgeois losers!

out, what the fuck are you doing with your life? Listening to Earth Crisis? Man!

5. D4! I think it was four years ago when I first said, "D4 is the best band in the universe!" and I'm still towin' the party line. *Situationist Comedy* is so damn good. I can't stop listening to the second song, "A Floater Left With Pleasure in the Executive Washroom" (Note: Bands should hire Paddy to write their song titles!). Can you beat these lyrics? "This isn't what we want/This isn't what we need/This is what we can afford." And then "Celebrate this sorry state/With anecdotes of what you hate/And Try to take comfort in the fact that

Maddy



do anything other than listen to D4 and Against Me! all year anyway), I'm gonna do Top Ten Most Punk Rock Things and Top Ten Least Punk Rock Things that have happened to me this year. Fans of lists, eat your heart out! Fans of the Zeros, beat your heart out! Aaaaaaaaagh!!!!

Okay, so down to business. Where to start? Negative or positive? Is the glass half-empty or half-full? Was Johnny Thunders the guy who stole Dee Dee's leather jacket in Paris or was he the savior of rock and roll? Was Joe Hill a revolutionary, genius songwriter, and all-around likeable bum, or was he a murderer? Questions, questions, questions! But, in the tradition of the optimism, *joie de vivre*, and lack of jadedness expressed by many great men (like, say, Howard Zinn and Aaron Cometbus), we must start positive! Come on, nothing

2. Getting Paid to Go to School! Due to what I can only assume was some computerized mix-up, I am getting paid \$16,000 a year plus free tuition and health insurance to study French history and Journalism. Not bad, I say! It sure beats working at Cereal Adventure (where, incidentally, I was almost sued by General Mills for writing about my experiences there).

3. Garbage Pail Kid cards! A Tight Pants reader keeps sending me 'em! Hooray! And, if anyone out there has the Mucus Marcus card, please, please, contact me!

4. Against Me! Jesus fucking Christ! I love this band! I got to see them in Portland this summer and it was one of the best shows of my life. People climbing all over each other, singing along, screaming, out of control, euphoria, madness, punk rock religious experience, I tell ya! If you haven't already checked them

you're not alone." I tell ya, hearin' this song live makes you wonder why people are wastin' their time in church when there are songs this inspiring out there. (If that sounds stupid, I'm sorry. If a great show doesn't make you feel like you could write a novel, change the world, have sex all night, or SOMETHING, you are missing out in a big way.)

6. Ben Snakepit! *Snakepit* is the best zine I've read in such a long time! Ben draws hilarious little comic strips for each day of his punk rock life! And he's so funny and cool! He even got one of my drawings tattooed on his arm. All hail Ben Snakepit! Get his zine before you do anything else! (And the December issue will be a split zine — me and Ben trade off drawing stupid stuff! Self-promotion! Alright!)

7. Aaron! I will not gross you out and ruin my hardcore punk credentials (gained from years of

bench-pressing over 100 lbs and rocking out, to, uh, Snapcase?), by writing cheesy things about my boyfriend! I will say this: My boyfriend is not opposed to jumping up and down on his bed while singing along to Mr. T Experience and going swimming in crazy polluted rivers. Alright!

8. Ben Hamper! Author of *Rivethead*, genius writer, and nice guy. Anyone who can use their shitty job as an excuse to write has my full endorsement. If we're gonna be fucked over by stupid, low-paying jobs working with people we hate, we can AT LEAST do something creative with it.

9. *Razorcake!* (Sean and Todd: please make check out to me, c/o Endorsement Department). Seriously though, what a bunch of cool people! Put your hands together for Sean and Todd! What other zine has interviewed Howard Zinn and Michael Moore in the past year? Plus, a punk rock magazine that's actually funny sometimes? A novel idea!

10. Minne-fucking-apolis! Oh beloved, beloved punk rock capital of the United States! How I miss you! Home of the best coffee shop (Hard Times), the best bar (Triple Rock), the best random strange people, the best bike explorations, the best porches..... aaaaaahhhhhhhh. If you're reading this from Minneapolis right now, consider me very, very jealous. My love for the Midwest knows no bounds. I will be back as soon as possible!

TOP TEN LEAST PUNK ROCK THINGS

1. New York! Man. I hate this city. I applied to grad school while broke, figured I couldn't afford it anyway, and then, surprise, surprise, got offered - to use the technical term - a shitload of money, which I felt like I couldn't pass up. The verdict is still out on whether or not all of this was a big mistake; but one thing I know for sure: I hate New York City. What's to like? It's expensive, girls wear high heels with jeans, everyone looks like a fucking model, it's crowded, it takes forever to get anywhere, there are no basement shows, there are hardly any good shows, period, there is no real punk scene, you go to shows and see totally different people each time, and everyone has something snotty to say about the rest of the country. A bunch of stuck-up assholes. Argh.

2. Grad School! Okay, so I'm in this strange joint degree program that combines French Studies and Journalism. Does it make sense? No! Would I rather just do Journalism? Yes, hell yes. But the French department is loaded and gave me the fellowship. So I'm stuck taking classes with a bunch of, well, could I use the term "Nazis"? Based on the following example, you decide. The first day of orientation in the French department, we had to discuss some books we were supposed to read over the summer. One of the books was about the prosecution of Nazis in France (During WWII, France was under the control of the Vichy regime, a French government that basically allowed the Nazis to do whatever they liked, deport Jews to concentration camps, eliminate freedom of speech and the press, and get a lot of French people to join organizations similar to Hitler Youth.) Anyway, the book we were discussing was about recent prosecutions of (now very elderly) Nazis. One guy, Papon, was responsible for sending Jewish children to Auschwitz, killing Algerians, and just generally being a total dick. So, France finally prosecuted him. And in the discussion,

this one girl said, "Ya know, why can't people just move on? I mean, this was all, like, so long ago, and it seems so, like, pointless. I mean, leave the guy alone. He's just a harmless old man." Almost as surprising as that insane comment was the fact that NO ONE besides me found anything objectionable about it. When I pointed out that sixty years is really NOT that much time in the history of the world, and why should we let someone get away with basically murdering thousands of children just because he's old, and what kind of message does this send that we don't care about anything that happened in the past, etc. etc., everyone just shrugged. Man.

3. Being Broke! Well, maybe being broke actually is "punk" (I don't have my punk rock dictionary with me right now), but it sure does suck. I think that my class rage has grown ten fold in the past year. Why should my roommate and I barely be able to make rent while other people have tens of thousands of dollars just lying around? I know it seems like a common complaint, but when you're really broke, it hits you, hard.

4. American Steel! I used to love this band! I used to feel almost as excited about this band as I currently feel about Against Me! But then they released a sub-par album and broke up. Sigh.

5. Jerks at Portland Zine Convention! See my column two issues ago.

6. French! Okay, so I havta study French history to get my check; but of all the histories to study, I dunno, French history does not really appeal to me. I would love to study Russian history, American history, Iranian history, and lots of other histories as well. But France? What can you say? A bunch of anti-Semites and snobs? Maybe a tad too harsh, but still. And we don't study the cool, punk rock stuff about French history (the worker uprisings, the bohemians, the anarchists). No, we study Napoleon. Although there's something ridiculous about knowing a ton about, say, Napoleon III's economy policy or the rise of liberal Protestant organizations in the 1860's (and I appreciate ridiculousness in all its forms, believe me), it is abundantly clear that I am definitely WASTING MY TIME. (Why can't I just stop taking French and just do journalism? See point #3.)

7. Dubya! Need I say more?

8. Feeling politically helpless! I am really having a hard time figuring out something useful I can do to fight all the horrible things that have happened in the past year besides just going to protests and writing political articles. Help.

9. Not living with my sister, candy-eater, Russian expert, and *Tight Pants* columnist, Emily. (Perhaps better known by her ridiculous punk name E. Nebulous Neezer - that's what happens when you assign punk names at age 12. Alright!) You're lucky if you can find one person who completely understands you, and it's no fun being half a country away from them.

10. New York pizza. Thin crust? No thanks!

Alright! So there you have it! My two top ten lists! Go forth and celebrate the New Year!

-Maddy

P.S. New issue of *Tight Pants* out and I'm not lyin' this time! Send two bucks or five stamps to: Maddy, 296A Nassau Ave #3L, Brooklyn, NY, 11222. For distro rates, email me: cere-alcore@hotmail.com



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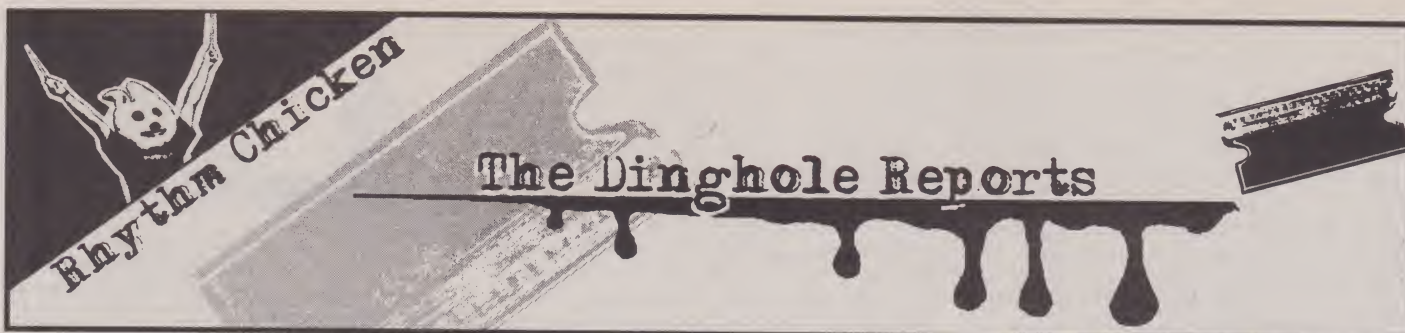
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I realized once again that looks and absurdity FAR outweigh professionalism and musicianship!

The Dinghole Reports

By the Rhythm Chicken

(Commentary by Francis Funyuns)

[Edited by Dr. Sicnarf]

Rhythm Chicken

Rytm Kurcze, Rytm Kurcze, tak, tak, tak! To jest prawda! Ja I moja dziewczynka jechamy do Polce! Doskanale! Jestemy bardzo szczecliwy I niespokojny! Dzis jest moja koncowy "Dinghole Report" z Ameryki!... Whoops! Oh yeah, I'm still in America. Sorry about that. Sometimes my beak gets stuck in Polish linguistics. So, anyway, this is my final Dinghole Report...

[Gasp! -Dr. S.]

(What do you mean?! How can this be? Why?! -F.F.)

[Please, Mr. Chicken, NO!! Please don't send me back to the *Peninsula Pulse*! I beg of you! -Dr. S.]

YOU DIDN'T LET ME FINISH! BUCKAW!! This is my final Dinghole Report... FROM AMERICA!

[(sigh) -F.F. & Dr. S.]

Starting with issue #13, I will be scratching out my Dinghole Reports from the medieval bowels of Krakow, Poland. You see, my Wisconsin fanbase has grown somewhat complacent. Minnesota and Michigan are both a little too "Fargo-ish". Becoming an Illinois resident would tear me apart on a molecular level, plus I would never get those Screeching Weasel guitar solos out of my head! Seeing as how my parents now live in Krakow, WI (population 80), I thought I would give them HUGE bragging rights by having their son move to Krakow, POLAND! (population 700,00+) Besides, I had so much fun dispensing ruckus in Eastern Europe last year, I thought I would just make it **RAZORCAKE** 32 permanent!

(So, does that mean we have to move WITH you? -F.F.)

Silly Francis. Thanks to modern technological giz-whackery, you and Sicnarf can still participate via Email. Besides, I need you two to stay here and Fed Ex me my weekly supply of Pabst!

[Participate via Email? Oh great. We'll be the Satellite Sisters of ruckus! -Dr. S.]

Ok, if you prefer, Dr. Sicnarf, I COULD send you back to the Pulse. I hear they've been lacking in the alcoholic mathematicians department lately.

(We like it right here, Mr. Chicken! The Doctor and I are backing you all the way! -F.F.)

[SUCKUP! -Dr. S.]

Settle down, you two! I don't have time for your HOOSHWASH! I've got four Dinghole Reports to cram in here this time. You SLICK-SLACKS keep your bickering to yourselves!

(Hooshwash? -F.F.)

[Slick-slacks? -Dr. S.]

ANYWAYZZZZZZ, I knew that my final Chicken gigs in America had to have that something extra to let the ruckus ring from sea to shining sea 'till my return. No bakesale or crock of Rhythm Chili would do in this case. I needed something BIG! Then I was saved by Rusty at Milwaukee's Rockhaus (my soul provider of fine instruments of ruckus). He graciously provided me with the LARGEST DRUM-STICKS IN THE WORLD! These ain't no Philly-sticks! These three-foot-long and two-inch-thick ruckus logs weigh in at about three pounds EACH! They are actually made by Pro-Mark and are supposed to be props or drumshop

decorations. I say SCREW THAT HOOSHWASH! These were MADE for the Chicken! The ruckus don't get no bigger than this!

[Pro-Mark? I thought you were loyal to your Regal Tip quantum 3000s? -Dr. S.]

(Yeah, I thought Pro-Marks were for "pros" or something. -F.F.)

—the Rhythm Chicken unsheathes the ruckus logs from his dinghole and clubs both Francis and Sicnarf over the noggins with a wooden "pthunk" sound —

I said NO MORE HOOSHWASH! I'm moving to Poland! Deal with it! I'm now playing Pro-Mark ruckus logs! Deal with it! I've been using Trillium Herbal Body Polish! Deal with it!

[(What? -F.F. & Dr.S.)]

{AHAAAA! GAY RUB!!!
-Ruckus Thomas}

Ooops! I mean....

Dinghole Report #25: Chicken Ruckus a-go-go!
(Rhythm Chicken sightings #252, #253, & #254)

After I pounded out some ruckus rock on *Chic-a-go-go* (Chicago's local punk rock *Solid Gold*-type TV show), Jake Roctober asked the Rhythm Chicken to play at his first festival of one-man-bands, aptly titled "Uno-a-go-go." A festival of one-man-bands? How could I pass up such a sheer spectacle of freakdom? I really have to hand it to Jake. He threw one hell of a giz-whack-o-ramma! One-man-bands from all over the country, from other countries, hundreds of them in a week-long festival! I was proud to be a part of such a monumental gathering of loners! Being a working stiff from the Wisconsin

northwoods, I could only attend two days of the festival. That Friday night, my Hen and I zoomed down to Chi-town straight from work to catch the festival at the Fireside Bowl. Upon arrival we found out that Jake's wife had gone into labor. He became a papa! His festival partner, the Fireside's Brian Peterson, welcomed the Chicken and gave him the green light. I decided to set up the Chicken Kit in front of the merch tables, just to be a clucker. I set down my beer, pulled on the Chicken head, and started the opening drumroll. The curious crowd gathered towards the back lanes, and then WHAMMO, Chicken ruckus! I rocked out a few rhythmic doses of sonic ruckus. A whiney-voiced audience member repeatedly shouted in each break, "You're not a chicken! You're a rabbit!" I repeatedly pointed him out and sent waves of audio ruckus his way. The taunting continued until I unsheathed my newest weapons of mass ruckus. Glistening in fresh ding-juice, I raised the ruckus logs to the sky. The place went nuts. I felt that my show was done, stood to accept more applause, bowed, grabbed my beer, and scurried to the back corner to rest and drink some ruckus juice. Eerily, the whole place was silently watching me. Someone took a picture of me in my Chicken head, drinking my beer in the corner. They thought there was more. They were as confused as I. It wasn't until my nest performance an hour later that I realized my previous mistake. I rocked out another Chicken show. The crowd yelled louder than before. I pulled out the ruckus logs and raised them skyward. The place hollered for more. Suddenly, right then, the revelation of sheer lunacy struck me and I knew my new purpose in time and space. I began PLAYING the drums with these foolishly enormous sticks! My hi-hat and floor tom fell over from the bombard-

ment. It was difficult to play with any accuracy or good timing, but DAMMIT it was LOUD and it looked good! The crowd went ruckus wild! I realized once again that looks and absurdity FAR outweigh professionalism and musicianship! My favorite other performers that night were King Louie One-Man-Band, World Provider, and Bob Log III. Afterwards, my Hen and I scratched over to Schuba's to catch the late set by Rex Hobart and the Misery Boys. A fine way to end the evening. Saturday we woke up at Mike Finch's mighty palace of here, just beneath the subway again! Later that night the festival continued at the Abbey Pub. Tonight's headliner was the mighty Lonesome Organist. I was excited. We sat and enjoyed overpriced ruckus juice through the opening acts. Long live Rocket Craig, the world's first atomic singer! Later, I was given the green light once again. This time I decided to set up in front of a back hallway, effectively blocking the entrance to the restrooms, also utilizing a wall mural of a demented leprechaun as a backdrop. Once again, the opening drumroll drew the curious crowd to gather 'round. Ruckus rhythms were pounded out to thunderous applause. They couldn't get enough! I knew they were ready so I drew the ruckus logs out of my dinghole and held them victoriously skyward. They yelled louder. Again, I attempted to PLAY with these rhythm rockets, but this time it was a little different. I was holding the logs more towards the middle for better balance and suddenly I learned that I could ACTUALLY PLAY somewhat EFFECTIVELY with these monsters! And DAMN are they LOUD! Ruckus is reborn! The Chicken's got new guns! The windy city ate it up. Genetically enhanced drumsticks, KFC be damned! Following the Chicken was LA's TV Sheriff and his Video Ape, then the Lonesome Organist. Uno-a-go-go was one of the coolest musical events I've ever encountered. Three clucks for Jake Roctoher and Brian Peterson! CLUCK CLUCK CLUCK!!! Also, Jake's newest issue of *Roctoher* magazine is a huge encyclopedia of one-man-bands. Simply put, it kicks a lot of dinghole!

(Now, about this so-called "hoosh-wash"... -F.F.)

[Yeah, and that "slick-slack" stuff. Is there a Polish joke in here somewhere? -Dr. S.]

Tak! Jestesz bardzo glupi, nie za madry wcale. Jaka szkoda!



Rhythm Chicken

Chicken finger, anyone?

(Huh? -F.F.)

Dinghole Report #26: Groovie Ruckus with the Ghoulies!
(Rhythm Chicken sighting #258)

It's been almost a full year since Green Bay's only all-ages venue closed down. What a joy it was to hear that Timebomb Tom was setting up an all-ages Groovie

Ghoulies show at the Riverside Ballroom! This is Green Bay's most beautiful old-timey ballroom. It hosted the second to last Winter Dance Party with Buddy Holly and the Big Bopper gracing the stage. After Green Bay was Clear Lake, IA, and then KERBLAMMY! On this stage I've also seen the Dead Kennedys, X, Husker Du, and Fugazi. Earlier this year, the Rhythm Chicken played here for

Dancin' Dan Marcelle's wedding reception (ye ol' chicken dinner). The aunts, uncles, and grandparents were groovin'. However, this time it was a rock show, and a groovin' one at that! Manplanet finished their pyro-explosive show. The Chicken Kit was thrown together in the middle of the dancefloor. The opening drumroll sounded off and the GB kids gathered around.. They remembered

their Chicken and repaid him with huge applause. The ruckus was good. It was time. I unveiled to Green Bay the mighty rhythm hammers, the ruckus logs! They roared. Re-inventing ruckus, one town at a time! I've upped the ante. Raise the ruckus bar one more notch. **THIS ONE GOES TO ELEVEN!!!** I flooded them with my ruckus-log-rhythms and the gig was complete. While tearing down, Manplanet's singer (Mr. White) approached me and asked, "Are you THEE Rhythm Chicken?" Is there another? The Groovie Ghoulies took the historic stage and rocked its nuts off! I'm a misfit, don't fit in. Later, Jake's pizza was consumed in blissful nostalgia.

[Yeah, yeah, Mr. Chicken. These safe kiddie shows with the big funny clown sticks sound all nice and cheery, but whatever happened to the Keith Moon drunken wrestle-rock gigs of the past? Sure, these so called "ruckus logs" sound all big and scary, but I'm afraid you've become no more dangerous than a cuddly punk rock petting zoo. —Dr. S.]

Oh, Dr. Sicnarf. You judge prematurely. These gigs were mere trial runs for the full blown explosive ruckus to come! I had to prepare for my gig with the Supersuckers!

(Fuckinay! And you WERE born with a tail!... er, hatched, that is. —F.F.)

Dinghole Report #27: Strangling, Wrestling, and Drunken Ruckus in Brewtown!

(Rhythm Chicken sightings #259 and #260)

The Rhythm Chicken's rockshow was requested, via Email, for an upcoming Supersuckers gig in Milwaukee. Seeing as how this is a four-hour drive from my Woodshed, I requested \$40 gas money. The Emailed reply read, "Let's just make it \$50, and all the Pabst you can drink." I smiled. A few weeks later I found myself back in Brewtown. *The Onion* even recommended the show and mentioned the scheduled gig by the Rhythm Chicken/Rally Rabbit before he's off to Poland.

(Fuck that Rally Rabbit shit! —F.F.)

Yeah, so I was about to load my kit **RAZORCAKE** 34 into the club when I

ran into Timebomb Tom and Steve Zamboni from Green Bay. They helped me carry in my terrible tools of ruckus. The club owner reads the bass drum and says, "So YOU'RE the Rhythm Chicken." I nod. He then says, "Well, you and your crew can load into the back room and then just go nextdoor for dinner and throw it all on my tab." My crew? I smiled again. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. My "crew" and I went nextdoor and violently inhaled their gourmet

THUD, THUD, THUD! Floor tom: BOOM, BOOM, BOOM, BOOM! Snare drum: CRACK, CRACK, CRACK CRACK! Tom chuckles. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. I walk away for a few minutes. Free Pabst. I return, sit at the Chicken Kit, and pull on my Chicken head. The packed club yells, "YAAAAAY!" Huh. I raise my Regal Tip quantum 3000's to the sky. The crowd yells, "YAY!" I stand up and raise my arms higher. The place yells louder,

start playing the drums just to drown him out. After unleashing a good sloppy dose of drunken ruckus rhythm on the crowd, they yell, "YAAAAAY!" I smiled again. I bend over and take a pull off of my beer. They yell, "YAAAAAY!" It appeared as if I had the packed club in the palm of my wing. (Even Eddie Spaghetti was watching from the stage, holding up his son to witness the Easter ruckus) But then the drunken heckler starts up again, "You suck!", "You suck!"

Instantly, Timebomb Tom has the heckler by the THROAT telling HIM to shut up! This is getting fun. The ruckus continues. More ruckus rhythms. More "YAAAY!" Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. More ruckus rock. More "YAAAY!" Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Then the heckler starts up AGAIN! Don't get me wrong. I totally DIG this shit! I finally break down and pull out my giant ruckus logs. I valiantly raise them up for all to see. The place goes absolutely WILD! I pound out some loud sloppy drunken log rhythms.

[Log rhythms? Logarithms? Is this where I come in? —Dr. S.]

The place goes crazy, and once again I hear, "You suck! You suck!" Like two scud missiles, I hurl the logs at the heckler and dive over my drums at him! **WRESTLE-ROCK! FREE PABST! RUCKUS!** The heckler and I are rolling around in the crowd. The crowd yells, "YAAAY!" The drunken heckler starts gushin', "I love you, man!" I just about had

enough and choose to end the Chicken gig. I stagger into the back room to more applause. The club owner is standing there. I expect him to send me back out to play the full hour, but he slaps a \$50 bill into my wing and says, "Worth every penny!" I throw the drums into the corner and watch the Supersuckers from the bar. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. After they're done I meet some friends at the Cactus Club. Christreater is bartending and says, "The Rhythm Chicken HAS TO play here, NOW!" I tell him that I'm too tired, drunk, and sore, but he wins me over by saying, "I'll give you free Pabst." Ugh.

(Right on, Rhythm Chicken! You hold the champion belt in ruckus rock! You stand alone! —F.F.)



Glistening in fresh ding-juice, I raised the ruckus logs to the sky. The place went nuts.

"chicken margarita" pizza, cannibal-style. Radioactive birdseed for the soul! Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. The opening band plays. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. The soundman finds me and says, "Okay, you're on for the next hour." The next HOUR? Was he expecting me to play for an HOUR? This ain't no PARADE! Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. I set up my Chicken Kit in the middle of the packed club. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. "How can I make this last for an HOUR?" Free Pabst. Free Pabst. Free Pabst. I use no microphones. I pretend to do a soundcheck. Bass drum: THUD,

"YAAAAAY!" I sit back down and the crowd watches me motionless for about ten seconds. I raise my arms again. The crowd yells, "YAAAAAY!" This little charade goes on for another twelve minutes. I'm jumping up and down, waving my wings, doing all sorts of drunken theatrics, but not once hitting a drum. The place yells, "YAAAY!" A rather drunk Milwaukeean in front of me grew tired of my hooshtwash and begins heckling, "Play your drums!", "You suck!", "You don't look like a chicken!", "You suck!" I flip him off, Johnny Cash-style. He continues to heckle so I decide to finally

[Indeed, Mr. Chicken! I stand corrected! -Dr. S.]

(Yeah! Now about this "hooshwash"... -F.F.)

Dinghole Report #28: The Last American Ruckus!.... (For Now?)

(Rhythm Chicken sightings #261 and #262)

The very next week it was another four-hour drive down to Milwaukee in the name of ruckus. I figured this could very well be my last concert in the good ol' US of A for quite some time. I jumped at the chance to play at the historic Modjeska Theater in Milwaukee's old Polish district with the Dismemberment Plan from DC (as in Washington, not Door County, a common mistake in these parts). It was a huge ancient beautifully ornate theater that left me in awe. As in previous D-Plan gigs, I fashioned my very own side-stage with a curtain. This time the promoter even arranged for my own spotlight from the balcony! As a backdrop I had an enormous circular prop left behind from

some previous event. It read, "Grammy Awards" with the gramophone symbol. The cool shit really does come together in the end. So the D-Plan took the big stage. Their singer, Travis, addresses the 400+ excited fans, "Hi. We're the Dismemberment Plan from Washington DC." The crowd yells. Just then, the spotlight illuminates the side-stage, Josh whips open the curtain, and there in front of the huge Grammy sign is the Rhythm Chicken doing his opening drumroll. Perfect! The crowd makes a collective "Wha?..." as they gather 'round. The tough-as-nails rhythm rock fills the old theater and the kids go crazy! The D-Plan give up some of their own time slot to enjoy the show. After a few doses of rhythm ruckus and applause, I feel that the theater of indie-rockers are ready for my new ruckus logs. I unsheathe my monsters, raise them up, and for a split second all is right in the world. There I am, the Rhythm Chicken, holding up my "Bunny" Carlos rhythm rockets with a Grammy Awards backdrop with a spotlight shining down on my

from above, and the crowd just goes wild. This is my ruckus. This is my punk. This is what keeps me scratching. The D-Plan were amazing as usual. While tearing down my set, a Chicken fan asks me if my ruckus logs are two legs from a table. I smile again. Afterwards, we all meet at the Cactus Club. Christreater is bartending and says, "The Rhythm Chicken HAS TO play here, NOW!... I'll give you free Pabst." So these were the final American gigs of the Rhythm Chicken. Maybe I'll do one more Door County tour if we get a good blizzard before I fly off (good being two feet of snow, or more).

[Well, Mr. Chicken, I await your correspondence from kielbasa-land. - Dr. S.]

(Good night, Johnboy! -F.F.)

Dobranoc!

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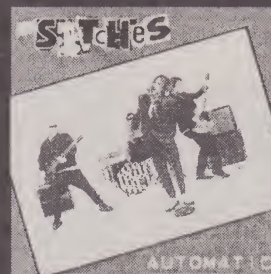
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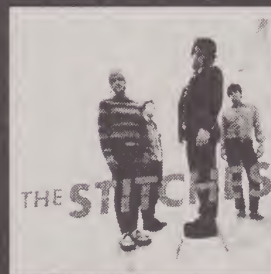
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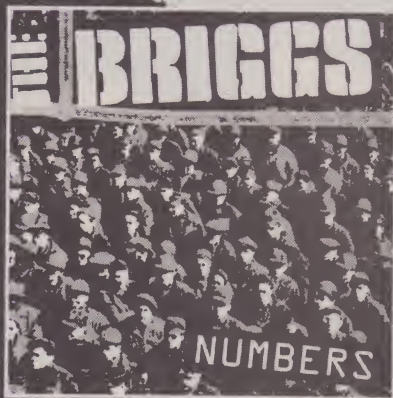
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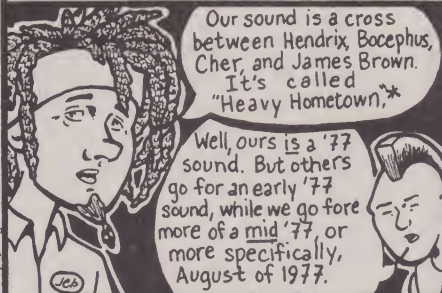
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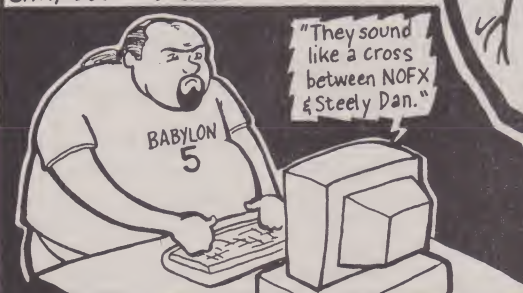
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Shawn Granton * NOV 2002

THE RATTLESNAKES



One More Chord Than the Competition Interview and Photos by Kat Jetson

Sometime earlier this year The Rattlesnakes slithered over and snuck up on me. "Hot damn!" I mused to myself as they blasted onto the stage and sunk their fangs into my unsuspecting heart. I knew right then that their love shot of high energy rock would forever be sloshing through my veins. Looking back on it now, I think what initially snagged me was Nathan, in a cool, green sweater, feverishly dancing and belting out vocals with vomit-inducing intensity. Imagine if Kurt Cobain stepped in on Frank Black's Pixies. Yeah, they're THAT good! Ask them where they're from and the answer will no doubt garner a quizzical look followed by something along the lines of, "Where the hell is Corona?" (It's Southern California-y.) But I thought, what the heck! Even bands from funny places deserve an interview.

Kat: What do you think about when you look out the window?

Watson: Which window? It depends.

Kat: Any window.

Nathan: I wasn't prepared for that.

Watson: Yeah. I thought you were going to ask me how to play drums.

Kat: I'm sorry. I have no drum questions.

Nathan: Uh.

Kat: That's not a very good answer. Have you ever been interviewed before?

Watson: I don't think so.

Nathan: What was the question?

Watson: What do we think about when we look out the window?

Nathan: I think about how terrible working is.

Watson: I guess I think about — pretty trees. The pretty sky.

Nathan: That question is too hard.

Kat: I heard a rumor that you weren't going to play a show for a whole two weeks. Is that a record?

Nathan: There was a period where we were playing six or seven times a month. But that wasn't until February. Before that it was, like, once a month. We once took six months off.

Kat: What were you doing?

Nathan: We were depressed.

[Watson thinks that's funny.]

Kat: Did you look out the window?

Aaron: We couldn't afford a window. That's why we were so sad.

Nathan: We're just taking some time off — getting our album together.

Kat: What are you going to do with your album?

Nathan: Sell it.

Kat: I want to know why Candice has a microphone only sometimes.

Nathan [to Candice]: Well!

Candice: They take it away from me when I'm being punished.

Kat: So you've been punished for two months now?

Nathan: We have some songs that she sings on and we have some songs that she doesn't, but the songs that she sang on were kinda cuter. And we're not cute anymore. We're older now.

Kat: That answer will do just fine.

Nathan: I feel like we're failing this test.

Aaron: Wait, do you want the truth when you ask these questions?

Kat: Sometimes people are serious. Sometimes they're not.

Watson: That's kind of like us.

Aaron: Yeah. Only more so.

Nathan: I've been telling the truth the

whole time.

Aaron: So have I!

Kat: Yes, we're very sad about your broken window, Aaron.

Aaron: It really is broken.

Nathan [to Aaron]: Which window!?

Watson: The one to his soul.

Aaron: I've broken a couple of windows in my day.

Candice: With his butt.

Nathan: He has broken two windows with his ass! Once, as a surprise, he came up to my apartment window and his ass hit the window and the whole thing just shattered, and his ass came through it. It was great!

Watson: Did you cut your butt?

Aaron: I'm a rock!

Nathan [to Watson]: Fuck no! What are you, stupid?

Kat: And what was the second time?

Candice: That was the second time!

Nathan: The first time was at Candice's mom's house.

Kat: You might want to be careful with that. It's like a weapon.

Watson: You must have a really hard ass. Or a big ass. Or a big, hard ass.

Nathan: Aaron's been arrested, too.

Watson: For his ass?

Kat [to Watson]: Do you want to talk about your drums? You seem sad that you don't get to talk about them.

Watson: That's all I know how to talk about.

Kat: What album do you get sad with?

Nathan: If I'm feeling like total, total shit, then I'll listen to Pedro The Lion.

Watson: Do you mean sad 'cause it affects us emotionally, or makes us sad that we're listening to it?

Kat: Like when you're sad and you put on a record to be sad with... To wallow in your depression, I guess.

Nathan: I like Low a lot when I'm sad.

Watson: I don't usually wallow. I'll just put on AC/DC. Or maybe Hank Williams, Sr.

Kat [to Eric who is sitting across the room and hasn't said one word so far in this interview]: Are you okay over there?

Kat: Okay, so... What do you think about when you look out the window? Just kidding.

Watson: You know what? I can't answer that because none of my windows look out onto anything.

Nathan: Maybe we just need some time to warm up, 'cause that's a good one, but it's kinda...

Aaron: It's kind of a tricky one.

Kat: Well, you didn't have any windows in school or anything?

Watson: Then I'd think about not being in school.

Aaron: That's what I think about — bad things. But I'm not going to put that in the interview.

Watson: You think about actually doing bad things?

Aaron: Noooo! Never mind.

Watson: I guess I don't understand.

Aaron: A couple of weeks ago I was driving on the freeway and there was this dumb fucker in an Aztek behind me with his brights on, and he just kept getting behind me.

Watson: An Aztek?

Aaron: Yeah, the Aztek. It's the dumbest fucking car in the universe.

Watson: I thought it was a person.

Nathan: It looks like Legos. Anyway, this guy has his fucking brights on and all I could think was that I wanted to stop my car in the middle of the freeway, reach into my glove box and get out my tire iron, get out of my car, and smash his lights out.

Nathan: Sorry, where were we?

Kat: No, that's okay. I guess he was technically looking out the window when he thought that. Anyhow, shifting gears — when was the first time you saw penis whipped out on stage?

Nathan: The singer from The Switch! He pulled out his dick and wrapped it around his guitar and he said, "Wrist watch!" I think his is the only dick I've seen.

Watson: Except your own.

Nathan: Except my own. And my roommate's.

Watson: You've seen your roommate's dick?

Nathan: In pictures.

(That doesn't seem normal to me, but I don't pursue that line of questioning.)

Kat [to Eric who still hasn't spoken]: You have any input?

Eric: I don't know anything.

Kat: Okay.

Nathan: I guess we don't go to enough shows.

Kat: What was the best present under the Christmas tree?

Watson: My Nintendo.

Nathan: When I was seven years old I really wanted this G.I. Joe jet and I got it.

Aaron: I'm still trying to remember.

Kat [to Candice]: Did you not have a Christmas tree?

Watson [to Candice]: What about a bike with streamers.

Kat: And a banana seat.

Nathan: Wait! One year my mom bought me cans of food 'cause she didn't like me.

Kat: What?!

Nathan: I got boxes of canned food for Christmas.

Watson: Awesome! Was it just like food she had in her cupboard for a long time and didn't want anymore?

Kat: Did she think you were setting up a food drive or something?

Nathan: I think it was to shove it in my face that she knew I didn't have any money.

Watson: I think everyone has one bad Christmas. One year all I got were shitty toy robots. And I didn't like robots.

Kat: But even shitty robots...

Watson: No, it sucks. When I was a kid I wasn't really into ironic toys. I liked toys that were actually cool.

Aaron: Once I got a bowling ball.

Kat: Is that good?

Aaron: No, I didn't bowl.

Kat: Well, you could throw that out your window next time you see an Aztek.

Watson: One time I asked for a Mongoose scooter and my parents got me a Ninja scooter, so I ghost-rode it until it died. All I know is that it didn't have the mongoose on it so I wasn't into it.

Nathan: Most kids ghost-ride bikes they don't want.

Candice: What does that mean? Ghost-riding...



Watson: Where you, like, ride it for a while and jump off and just push it, and it goes by itself until it crashes.

Aaron: Here's a question for all you guys — did you ever have a Big Wheel?

Watson: Fuck, yeah!

Aaron: Did you ever turn it upside down and turn the pedals and say that you were the ice cream man?

Watson: No! That's the most retarded thing I've ever heard.

Aaron and Candice: Everyone on our block did it.

Watson: Well, that's 'cause you guys are from Corona.

Candice: I ask everyone and we still can't figure out where that whole ice cream man thing came from.

Watson: Maybe Corona?! That doesn't make any sense to me.

Aaron: It doesn't make sense to me either, but we all did it.

Kat: Did any of you have a Green Machine?

Nathan: Yeah! I remember the Green Machine.

Kat: Hot! Bands have written songs about the Green Machine.

Nathan: You'd know it if you had one.

Kat: If you were stuck in an elevator with one live object and one inanimate object, what would they be, and what would you do with them?

Watson: Oh man. I'll go last. How long are you stuck in there?

Kat: Let's just say like, a day.

Watson: I'd say — this is really generic sounding... A hot chick and a helicopter.

Kat: A helicopter? In an elevator?!

Watson: Yeah.

Kat: Okay, well... What would you do with them?

Watson: Fly around.

Kat: In the elevator?

Watson: You didn't say how big it was. It could be a giant elevator.

[Lots of laughter ensues.]

Aaron: He's got you there. I'd pick a dolphin and a bucket of fish, and I'd train that dolphin to get me out of the elevator. And then I'd sell that dolphin when I got out. Like, on eBay. 'Cause like, it's trained.

Kat: That's actually brilliant. I have to commend you on that answer.

Watson: Or a dolphin and a helicopter.

Kat: You could teach it how to pick up hot chicks. Just swoop down in its helicopter.

Watson: I've always wanted one (a helicopter).

Nathan: You seem more like a jet pack kinda guy.

Watson: Either/or. Eric?

Eric: What?

Watson: What would you want?

Eric: Ask me last.

Nathan: I'd say a wizard and a knife. And I'd use the knife to make the wizard get me out.

Aaron: But he's a wizard.

Nathan: He still has to do what I say.

Watson: You'd need some anti-wizard knife or something.

Nathan: Okay, can I change that to a magic knife? Or maybe a wizard and some valium.

Kat: What would you do with the valium?

Nathan: I'd drug him. And then you don't even want to know...

Kat [to Candice]: You're apparently fourth to answer because Eric would like to be last.

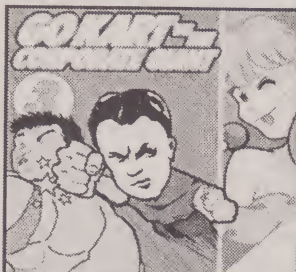
Watson: C'mon, Candice. You can't pass on this one.

Candice: Yeah, I can.

Nathan: Boooooooo! Boooooooo!

Watson: If you pass, I get to bash your head in with one of these

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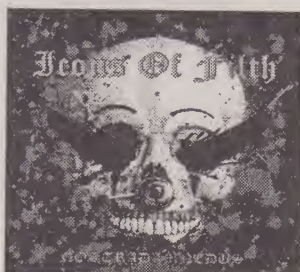
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[microphones].

Nathan [angrily at Candice]: Come on! Pick me! Pick me!

Candice: Nathan.

Watson: You have to say what Candice would say, though.

Nathan [answering for Candice]: No, you pick me and...

Candice: Nathan and...

Watson: A million dollars...

Candice [laughing]: Yeah, and a million dollars.

Nathan: Nathan and a life raft.

Kat: Is that your answer? What would you do with them?

Nathan: Or Mexico. Pick Mexico!

Everyone: Yeah!

Candice [obviously just saying whatever she's told to say]: Nathan and Mexico.

Kat: That's great, but what would you do with them? You still have to do something with them.

Nathan: Duh.

Watson: Nathan and Candice would hang out and surf back home.

Kat: In the elevator.

Watson: Yes, in the elevator.

Kat: Mexico is in the elevator at this point.

Watson: You never said how big the elevator was.

Aaron: You've got money. You could buy the dolphin off of me.

Watson: You can surf the dolphin.

Aaron: You could buy my trained dolphin, and the dolphin will lead you back home.

Nathan: Eric, you need to go.

Eric: Alcohol. And a robot butler to serve me alcohol.

Kat: Okay, that'll do.

Aaron: Wait, are robots alive?

Watson: NO!

Aaron: 'Cause I saw this really compelling movie...

Watson: Don't say *Short Circuit*.

Aaron: It was called *The Toy*, and it was about this boy robot and he didn't want to be a robot...

Nathan: Okay, next question.

Kat [to Nathan]: You have lots of songs about skulls and horses. Explain.

Nathan: There aren't that many songs about skulls.

Kat: There's three.

Nathan: Really? Name 'em.

Watson: Well, there's "Curse of the Skull Head."

Nathan: One.

Kat: And there are two songs where the word skull is actually in the song.

Nathan: Are you sure?

Kat: Swear to God.

Kat: It can be from a movie, too.

Nathan: This is hard for us, 'cause three of us lived together and we didn't have a television for four or five years.

Watson: It wasn't my favorite, but I saw a pilot with The Muffs. It was a cop show and there was a character obsessed with the lead singer of The Muffs.

Kat: Serious? This was a TV show?

Watson: It was a pilot that never got made into a show.

Kat: L7 were in *Serial Mom*. Camel Lips...

Nathan: Aaron's dumb girlfriend at the time wanted me to go see that movie with her, and I didn't know anything about it, but she said L7 were in it wearing crotchless pants, so I'm all, "Okay." I never saw the crotchless pants.

Kat: So this interview has been me, Nathan, Watson and Aaron.

Eric: I've said stuff. I said one thing.

Watson [about Candice and Eric]: Usually you can't get those two to shut up.

Kat: What video game would like to be stuck in? Okay, look, I don't know how long — it doesn't have to be forever.

Eric: Space Quest. You'd just have a big blockhead with this big black dot in the middle of your head.

Watson: Either that or Hamburger Time.

Nathan: Burger Time. Not Hamburger Time.

Watson: Whatever.

Nathan: Candice?

Candice: I don't play video games.

Nathan: You've played video games!

Watson: You have and you know of things called video games.

Aaron: What about Off Road?

Nathan: Just pick...

Kat: Pac-Man. So you can eat lots of dots.

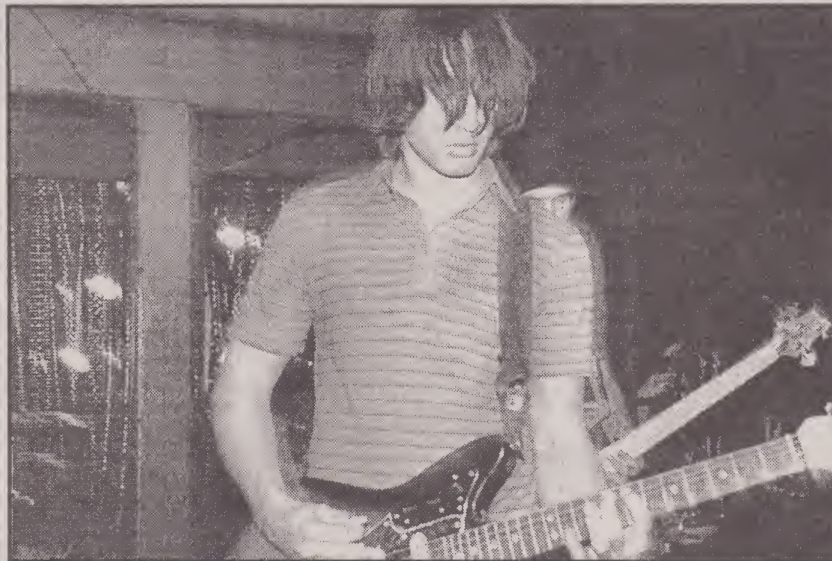
Nathan: Pac-Man: All the dots you can eat...

Kat: This is your last question, so make your answer good. What's been the wildest thing you've done on a dare?

Eric: I made out with the same girl Aaron and Nathan made out with. A long time ago.

Watson: I wrestled a drunk dog once. But I don't remember it being a dare.

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**You must have a really hard ass. Or a big ass.
Or a big, hard ass.**



Nathan: Okay, okay. Well, my brain hurts me A LOT! And I think about that a lot. And there's only so many times you can use the word "brain," so I start using "skull." As for the horse thing — it's always been there in my life, and anything creative I've ever done, horses always end up in it. [Everyone laughs.]

Nathan: Every short story I've ever written has had a horse in it. I don't ever do it on purpose, it just ends up there. Maybe in my past life I was a horse.

Kat: What's your favorite guest appearance of a band on a TV show?

Watson: Is a TV show in like, a movie?



HOUNDING OLD FRIENDS

JUST TO PROVE A POINT:

AN EAST L.A. PUNK ROCK FAMILY TREE

BY JIMMY ALVARADO

PHOTOS BY REBECCA RODRIGUEZ



Six years ago, following a set by the band I was in at the time, I found myself in a conversation in the parking lot of Mr. T's (once a bowling alley, now a notorious music venue where many a punk band has played over the years) with the proprietor of a punk rock reissues label. We were chatting about the bands that played that night and some of the stuff he had coming up for release in the upcoming months, and I inevitably brought up the subject of wanting to release a compilation of old East Los Angeles punk bands.

He professed ignorance of all but a few "name" bands, and I was a little surprised. This was a guy I always viewed as a veritable encyclopedia of Los Angeles punk rock history, a guy who knew damn near everything about damn near every band that ever plugged into an electrical socket in Southern California, and he hadn't heard of the bands I was raving about. Names of bands I'd seen sell out rented halls, that I'd seen win over backyards stuffed with scenesters across the quilt-pattern of neighborhoods that comprise East Los Angeles registered not an ounce of recognition in his eyes.

Normally, it wouldn't have been all that big a deal. He was from Glendale, and considering how insular and cliquish punk rock can be, it was understandable that he wouldn't know much about what was going on ten to fifteen miles from his home. Thing was, he wasn't alone in his ignorance.

Others have come along over the years who have professed to have some modicum of knowledge about the East LA music scene, yet were (and are) equally ignorant of the music that was coming from the bars, halls, and backyards of the barrios, and they haven't seemed all that interested in much of what has gone on in East Los Angeles's punk scene. Outside of three bands — the Brat, Los Illegals, and the Odd Squad — all of which were associated with an artist collective known as "Asco" and comprised a scene-within-a-scene, the knowledge about punk rock in East LA that these persons managed to amass was, at best, rudimentary and, at worst, elitist.

And they were writing books that not only repeatedly drove home a wholly inaccurate and skewed view of a scene they obviously knew nothing about, they compounded the problem by lumping in bands that had nothing to do with the East LA punk scene.

So I wrote my own article.

"Teenage Alcoholics: Punk Rock in East Los Angeles," published last year in issue #3 of *Razorcake*, was initially prompted by a request from Todd to create a family tree of all the bands I'd been in that could later be expanded to include other bands, but instead ended up being written with the intent of putting in print something that countered the long-propagated fallacy that East LA never had a punk scene larger than three groups, and that gave some others some long overdue recognition. I dedicated my efforts to the memory of a very good friend and promising musician who was murdered on Santa Monica Beach in 1991; collected some flyers, record covers, and photos from the period covered to serve as "art"; handed it all over to Todd and Sean to lay out; and waited for the whole thing to be either nit-picked over factual errors or soundly ignored.

Quite the opposite happened. Not only was the article well received, it was picked up and reprinted in last year's *Zine Yearbook*, increasing the article's circulation and potential number of eyes that would read it. I started getting calls from people wanting to know more about the scene I had written about, one that they never knew existed. Old friends I hadn't spoken to in years contacted me, including Shane White, who called me an "asshole" for not including the Looters, a band he and I were both in. Strangest of all, Los Illegals bassist Chuy Velo thanked me for writing the article and made a public display of paying me for an autographed copy. (By the way, Chuy, the asada tacos

those two bucks paid for were good.)

Butt Acne - Scott

One of the most frequently asked questions about "Teenage Alcoholics" has been "Where's the family tree?" While the idea of a family tree had jump-started the whole project and was even mentioned as accompanying the original article, it was not included, partly due to space concerns stemming from the length of the piece, partly out of a desire to include more bands than originally on the tree, and the difficulty of finding others willing to help fill in some blanks. When the layout was completed, Todd and I had a number of discussions about the tree and we decided to pull it from the original article at the last minute with the intention of printing it at a later date. After hunting down and incessantly hounding some old friends, bandmates, and other assorted scenesters, we've got enough of a good start to comfortably share our efforts.

Todd asked me a few weeks ago (as I crawled around his floor, cutting little boxes of names and taping them to a larger piece of paper so that he would have less trouble figuring which band lineup fit in where) what I thought the significance of the tree was, and, at the time, I couldn't really think of an answer. I did come up with a few observations, though:

1. IT IS MIGHTY STRANGE TO SEE A
SIGNIFICANT PART OF YOUR LIFE
MAPPED OUT ON PAPER.

This sentiment was seconded by some of the others who provided their band histories for the tree. Each box represents a segment of time in the lives of those involved and certain memories are attached to them. Naturally, talk about the different lineups of different bands often resulted. In some cases, we've incorporated some of that talk as small bits of trivia to add some flavor to the tree.

2. FAMILY TREES CAN BE LIMITING

One of the most frustrating aspects of doing this tree is that it can be a very sterile look at a very vibrant and diverse scene, populated by a variety of characters, psychotics, geniuses and hangers-on alike and was overflowing with some really good music, and some of that is lost in these little boxes filled with names. It is, however, a relatively straightforward way to illustrate the scope and size of the scene. You may not be able to hear all that was going on, but you are able to visualize how much was going on.

3. SOME SURPRISING MUSICAL
CONNECTIONS CAN BE FOUND ON THE
TREE, SOME TO MAINSTREAM ARTISTS.

Not only has a member of one band gone on to play drums 400+ miles away for Berkeley's Corrupted Ideals, another has gone on to play with Macy Gray and a few have even played for thousands of people in a foreign country. That's a pretty wide stretch there. A number of direct lines can also be drawn to LA's "New Chicano Groove" scene, which includes bands like Ozomatli, Blues Experiment, Yeska, Lysa Flores, Aztlan Underground, Calavera, Slowrider and others, many of which are populated by old East LA punkers.

4. RECALLING YOUR HISTORY DOES
NOT NECESSARILY HAVE TO BE AN
EXERCISE IN AN UNHEALTHY
AMOUNT OF NOSTALGIA.

One of the perks of an active and continually evolving scene is that the level of pining for the "good old days" is kept at a minimum. Much of the older crowd still maintains ties to, and are often still active in, the

scene. Why waste time pining for long-dead bands when there's still so much going on? Still, it is nice sometimes to stop, take a look back at where you've been and marvel at how far you've progressed.

I guess if I *had* to answer Todd's question, I would have to say that a tree mapping out East LA's punk band is no more or less significant than a tree mapping out some other punk scene's history.

Part of the beauty of punk is that, theoretically, everyone is an equal, be they the singer of a band belting out his latest composition, the writer of a fanzine pasting together a layout in his bedroom, or some kid singing along and going apeshit in the front row of a gig as his favorite band plays his favorite tune. There are no heroes, no rockstars, and no "leaders." Sometimes this may not seem to be the case, but it is one of the basic tenets upon which the punk scene was founded.

With that in mind, the history of East LA punk rock is just as significant as the history of Black Flag, or the more celebrated scenes of Hollywood, Orange County, or the South Bay, because to some of us, the Stains, The Thrusters, Social Conflict, No Mind Asylum, or Moral Decay matter just as much as Social Distortion, The Clash, X, Circle Jerks, The Replacements, Minor Threat, Terveet Kadet, Mob 47, or Raw Power matter to their respective scenes. Every punk band in every scene is merely a stitch in a tapestry that spreads across every continent on the planet.

Yes, Virginia, there is punk rock in East LA. This tree says, contrary to what others might say, that it has existed here for quite some time. Significance, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder and, as someone who finds no shame in still being a punk twenty years on, I can say with all sincerity that my scene means everything to me.

SOME NOTES ABOUT THE TREE

Todd, who also got Joe Henderson from Hawaii's Hardcore to contribute a lineup for Detox, did the layout and design of the tree.

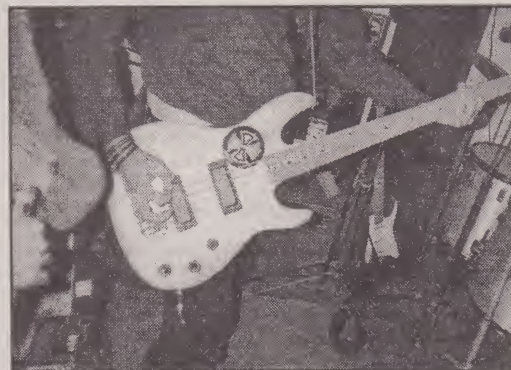
The photos accompanying this article were taken by Becky Rodriguez (formerly Minjarez). Becky has long been involved with East LA's punk scene, both as a photographer and as bassist for the Fingers and Tumors.

Heaps of gratitude are extended to Billy Branch, Julio (No Church On Sunday), Scott Matsuda, Art Muñoz, Johnny "Boots" Rodriguez, Tracy Skull, Pat Houdek, and Shane White, all of whom contributed greatly to this project and who actually came through with info about the bands they were in.

The intention of this project is to be as inclusive as possible of every band from East LA, from the famous to the obscure, to the good to the bad and whatever's in between. Subsequently, this tree should by no means be construed as "complete," or "finished," as it is neither. While there are a great many bands represented here, the vast majority that have existed over the years are not. This tree, like the original article, is still an active project and additional contributions for both are both welcome and heartily encouraged. Put more plainly, if you were/are a member of (or have some knowledge of) Ab-Zero, AD-Do, AFU, Anti-Social, Archenemy, Armistice, AWOL, Barney's Army, Batman's Enemies, The Brat, Black Jax, Bloodcum, Cassius Clay, Circle One, Clowns Gone Bad, Corporal Punishment, Crucial Justice, Decry, Dick Jerky and the Ballscabs/Dead Nips/No Pearls/Braindance/Infamy, Empirismo, Handicap/C.O., Incomplete, Insurrection, Jeff's Parents, Kill the Lights, The Kind, Latch Key Kids, Laughing Matter, Los Illegals, Los Lobos, Malignance/Rise and Fall, Marble, Negative Image, PAL, Positive Commitment, Resistant Militia, Side Effects/Last Round-Up, The Shrooms, Social Conflict, Stains, Strength In Numbers, Subsist, Teenage Rage, The Thrusters, Tongue, The Trip, Union 13, Violent Children, The Warriors, Your Mom, or any other band, past or present, from the East Los Angeles area and would like to be included on the tree, please contact *Razorcake* with the necessary information, as the tree will be updated as frequently as possible. This is an attempt to preserve our collective history. Without the input of those who were/are a part, it will never be complete.



Butt Acne - John



No Church on Sunday



(1 to 4 - Gabe) (OBS), Jimmy (OBS), Shane (Chainsaw Blues), Bobby (OBS)



Butt Acne - Scott, John



No Church on Sunday

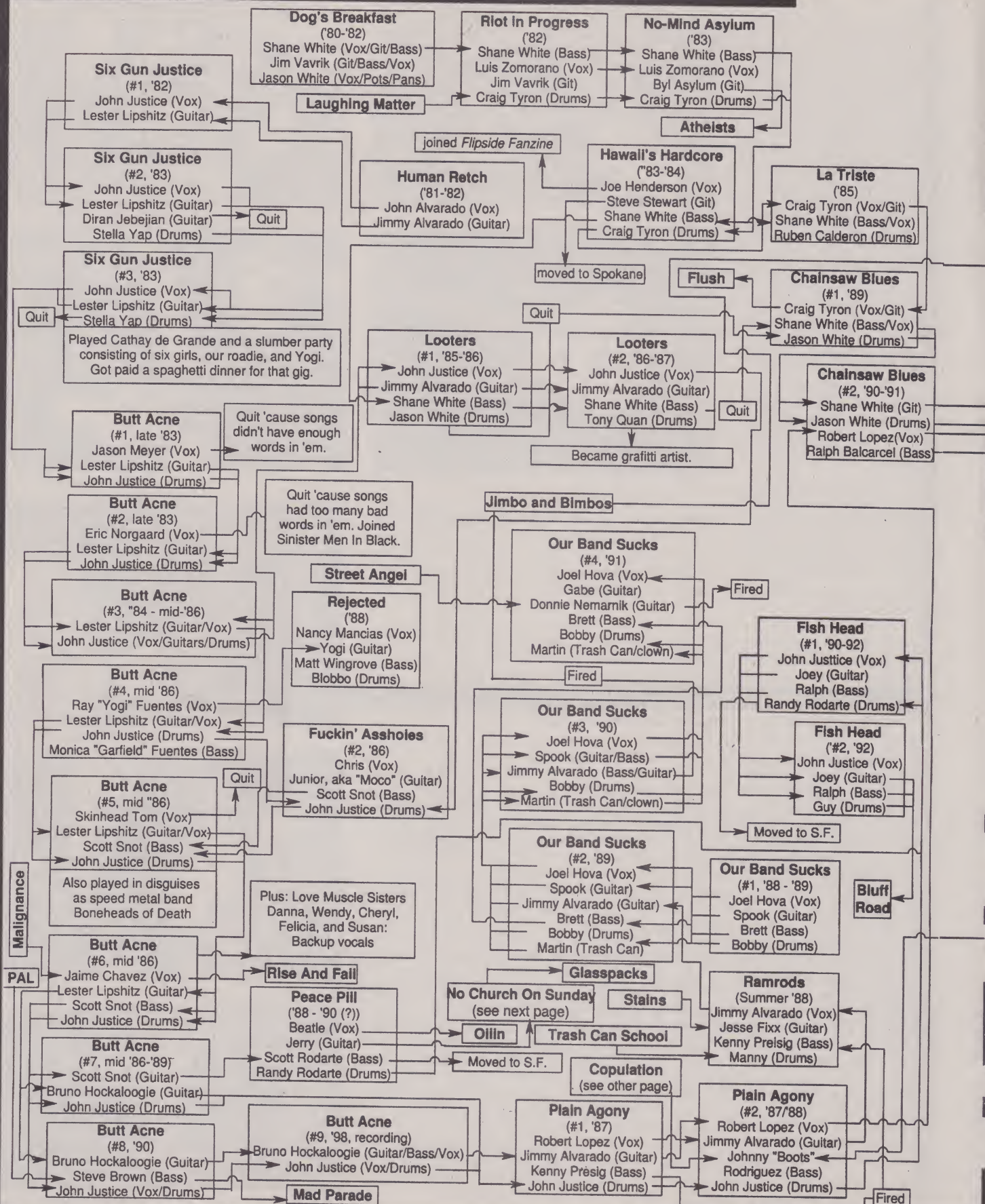


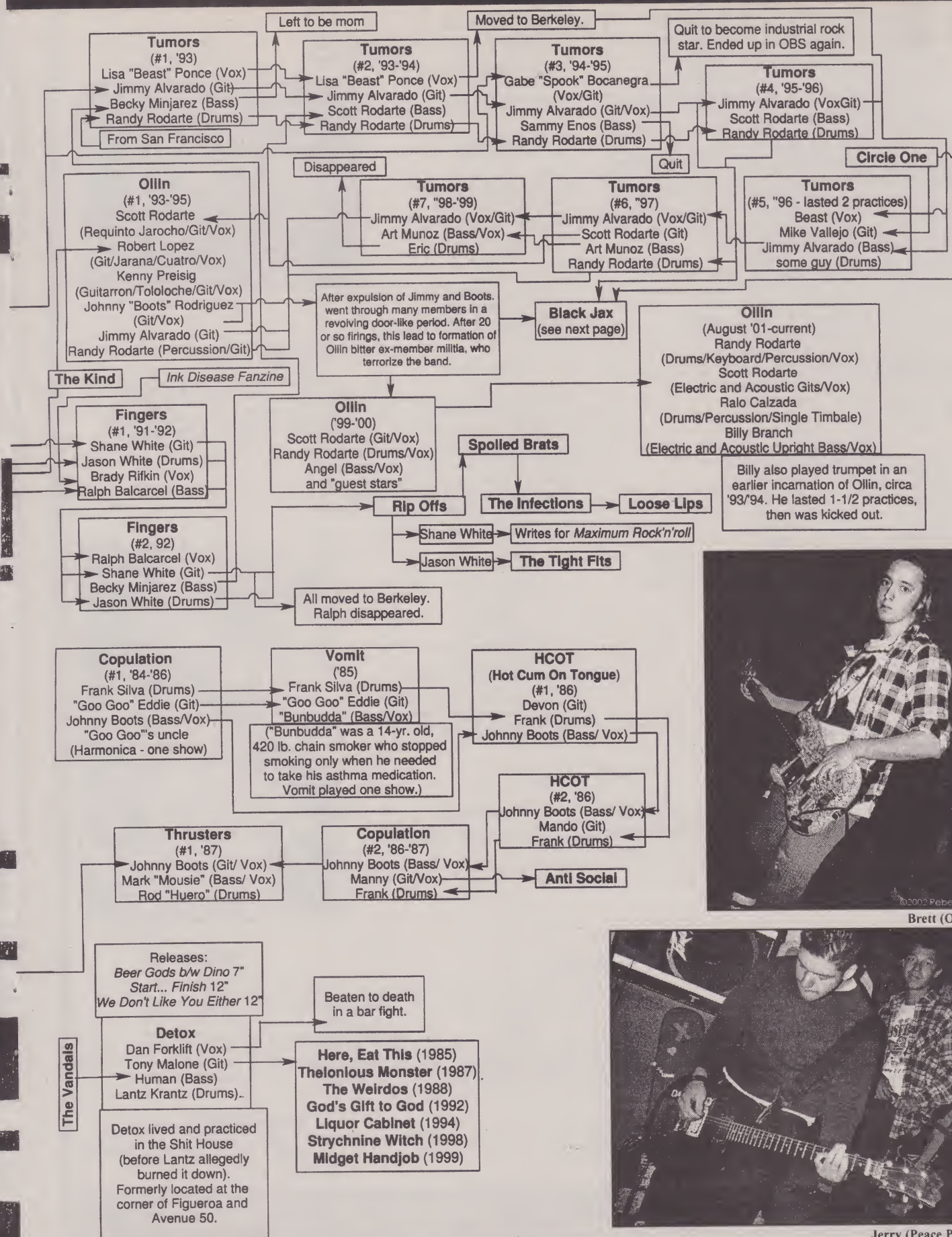
Peace Pill



John (Butt Acne) and Zeke

PARTIAL EAST L.A. FAMILY TREE

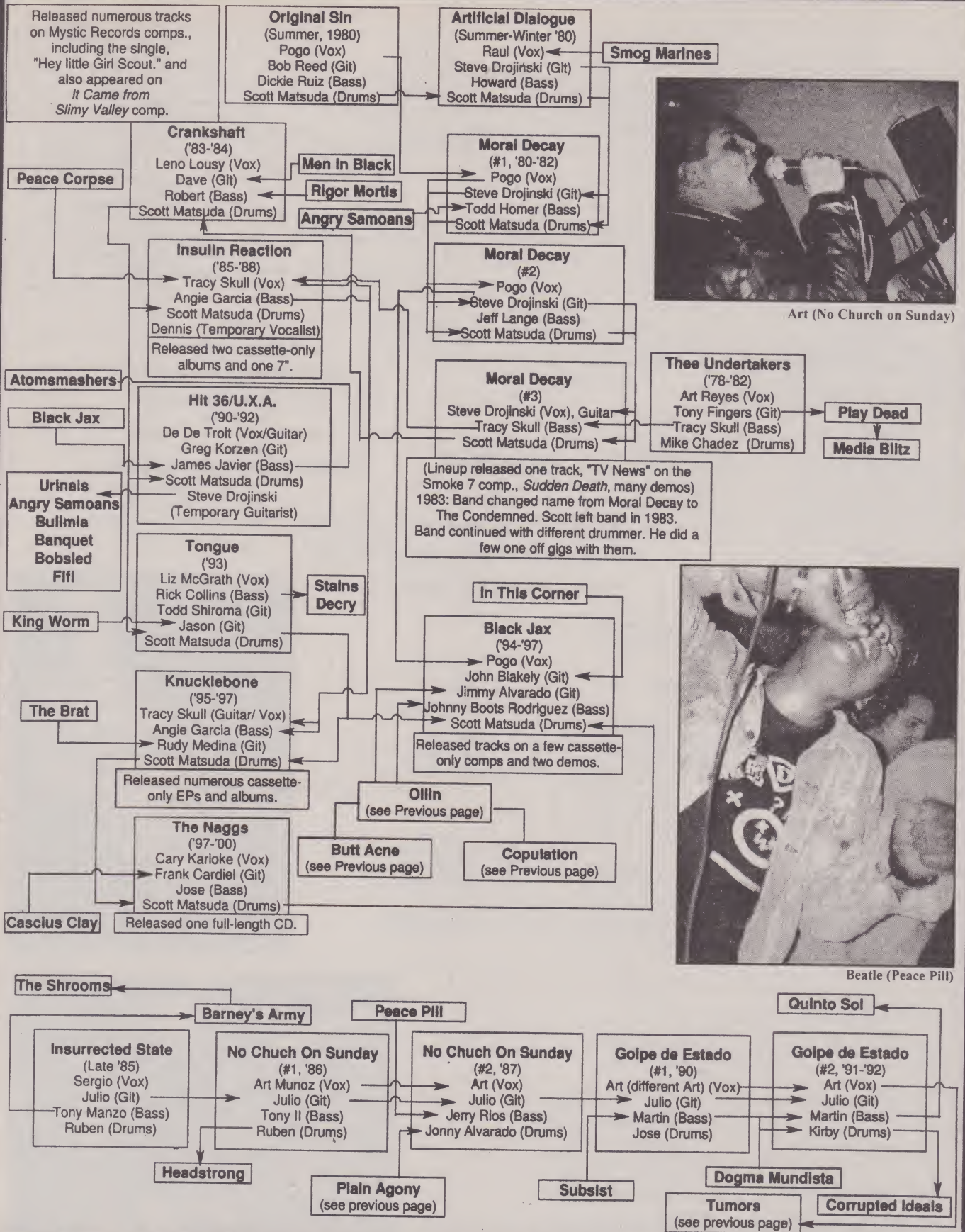




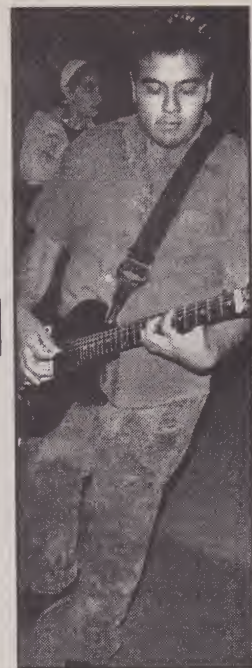
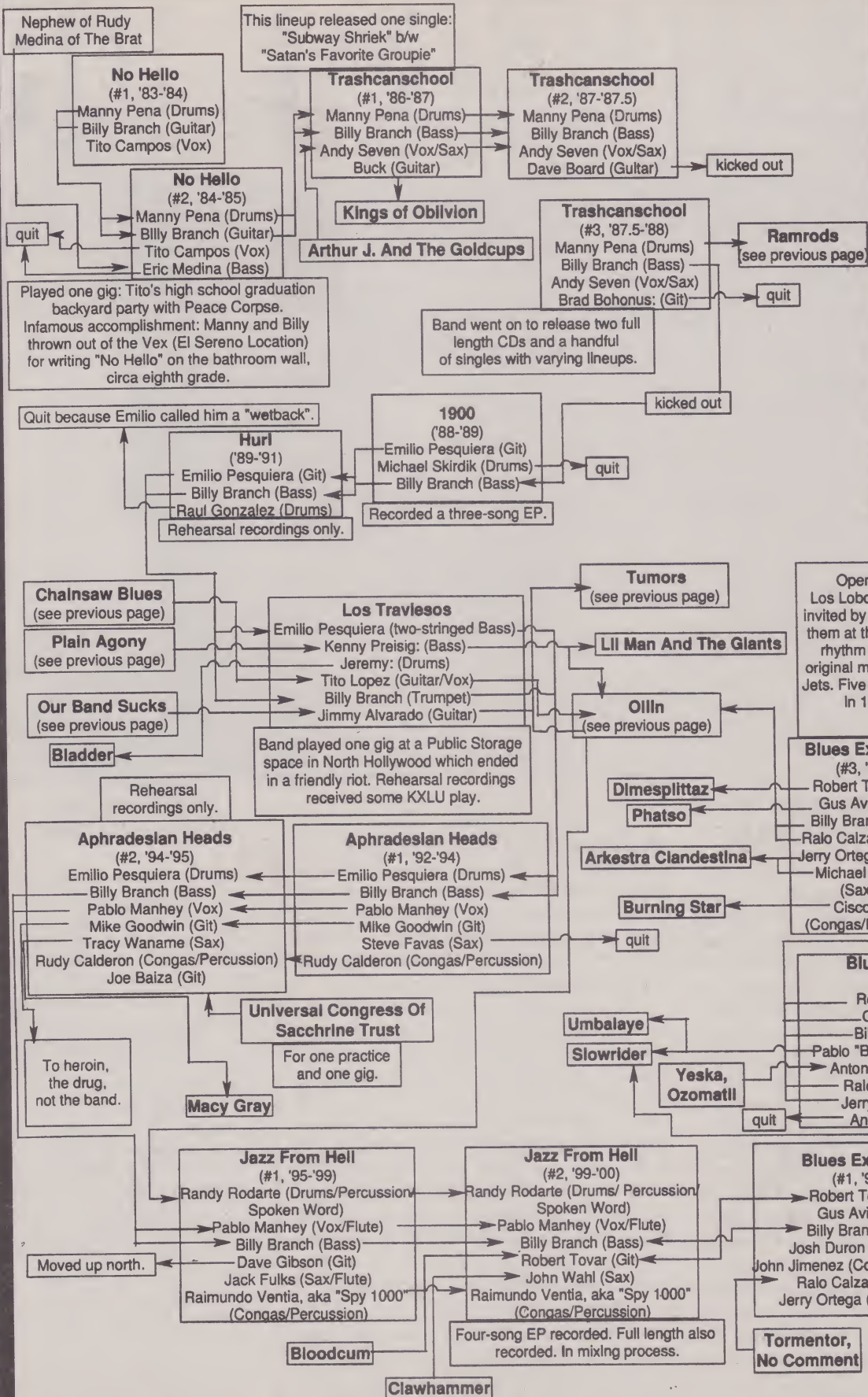
©2002 Rebecca
Brett (OBS)



Jerry (Peace Pill)



PARTIAL EAST L.A. FAMILY TREE



Julio (No Church on Sunday)



DILLINGER FOUR



There are bands that help define a time.

I'm not talking in some jackoff rock journalistic sense that I can baste myself in the hopes of saying, "I knew them back in the day" ten years from now to help slide my hand under some lady's panties or get a backslap from a dude. I'm talking in a visceral, needle-to-vinyl sense where monkeys take over the universe, shove tubes into your muscles and clamp electrodes on to your fleshy parts. Bewildered, you watch them plug in their instruments. Before you can react, they blow your head, making your brain a fluorescent, glowing mushroom cloud with nuclear rings smoking out from it. Music so good, it's almost impossible not to like, unless you masturbate with bobble head figurines of teen pop idols or get slap happy to the sounds of television screens breaking.

C'mon. Crack the whip. Fuck the sip. Guzzle.

The radio sounds mostly like an extended fart. Critics mix up mind-blowing with PR dick-sucking. Bands that play like they're providing background music to instructions on how to tie your shoes are being touted as the "voice of a generation." Leave me out of it. It reeks of date rapes at the doorstep of music's mortuary.

Give me D4, a band that plays, sometimes bloody, sometimes naked. Give me something that makes my stereo's speakers throb and blare as I shout along with them, providing more ammunition for my downstairs neighbors to try and evict me. Give me a bomb that hasn't exploded but the fuse is still lit, held by some grinning, drunk Midwesterners who have given me another way to cope with a life that's intolerable in so many ways.

Yeah, it all sounds pretty grandiose and maybe I should just adjust my meds, but when I plop one of their records on, things slip loose, and I say for the thousandth time, "Yeah, what a motherfucking band."

Interview and pictures by Todd

Todd: Lane, please cover the incidents leading up to meeting the security personnel of the Sahara Hotel in Las Vegas.

Lane: When I was first out there a few years ago for the Punk Rock Bowling Tournament, my friends and I had an enormous amount of acid so we brought a pretty significant amount with us. The first thing we did as soon as we got off the plane was drop some acid and hit the bar — we're drinking all night and everything, and sooner or later, someone says, "Man, I can't believe it's daylight out. It's morning." It was incomprehensible to me. You know what it's like to be in a casino. It's dark. You're not supposed to know what time it is. So my friend, Aaron, and I go to investigate and, sure enough, we walk outside and the sun is shining. It's beautiful. He and

I feel like we're in our own world, and I walk into the oasis at the center of the traffic circle at the Sahara, and I kind of think, well, as long as I'm here, I might as well take a piss.

Todd: Since you're in the jungle.

Lane: That's right. Since I'm at the oasis, looking for relief. So, I put my beer down on the pillar and let loose. It was no small piss. About halfway through, I suddenly realized I wasn't the only one in the world with my friend. In fact, there were people unloading their luggage and milling around everywhere and I was in a very, very public place. Luckily, I was able to finish up. I grabbed my beer. I run back inside and go back to talking to people, which was my girlfriend and some of her friends who I had just met at that time. Didn't know 'em. Suddenly, about a minute later, I'm surrounded by about five or six armed security guys, and this guy says, "Do you think what you just did was funny?" In my state of mind, I knew he was trying to trick me into saying something wrong, something that could lead to a little jail stay or something like that. So, I'm trying to think of a reasonable way to answer that question. I want to put my beer back on the bar to address

ships.

Lane: I think to be effective as a clinician, you have to have some degree of objectivity and I don't think I would. Friendships — we've known each other for a long time, so it's not really a consideration.

Todd: I know that you and Erik met at Hamline University, but how did you fall in line with what you're doing now? What persuaded you to go, "Here's something that I haven't listened to," and then you start drumming for a band that is, quite possibly, unlike anything you've heard specifically before?

Lane: Well, I spent a couple years pretty much blackout drunk.

Todd: [laughs]

Erik: He's not kidding.

Lane: I'm not kidding.

Todd: [tries to stop laughing]

Lane: Honestly, though, meeting Erik, and probably one of the first punk bands, quote unquote, was probably Bloodline (a band that Erik was in). Where I grew up, there wasn't punk music. There really wasn't. It had never come across my radar screen before and I met Erik at college, and gradually through him, became more and more exposed to punk music and that type of

think we're lucky with that. Within or without of the punk scene, we all had kind of different tastes, so we weren't going to be, automatically, anything. It was very up in the air to what kind of sound we would eventually have because we weren't going for any sort of specific thing and the few influences that we all kind of could agree on, things that we were into, were pretty diverse right from the start.

Todd: So, how much does Otis Redding have on the direction of your sound?

Erik: Direction of the sound? Sometimes, I wish more. I think soul music, in particular, when it's incorporated into punk well, it's so fucking good, but it's really hard to do it. Rocket From The Crypt is one of the few bands that really has — as far as bands that aren't total garage bands that come much more directly from that — done it well. There's times where we're like, "Let's sorta have one of those beats, sorta like an Otis Redding song." When you translate that through the four of us, no one would probably ever get that, but that's how we see it.

Lane: It's an intangible quality and it comes down to whether you think a band has depth of influence or not. Those things translate in ways that probably, even being

Lane: Well, I spent a couple years pretty much blackout drunk.

DELINGER FOUR

this guy and grab a breath. My depth perception was off and thinking that I'm letting my bottle go over the bar, I actually let it go over the tile floor and it falls. It bounces once and there's this collective gasp, and then it shatters. So, that was, effectively, my answer to that question to that guy. I just turned to him. I said, "You know, I have a room at this hotel, and I believe I'm calling it a night." And they escorted me all the way up to the room with a couple of friends I was with.

Todd: Did they rough you up at all?

Lane: No. Actually, I'm kind of surprised that I didn't get booted out or that sort of thing. We got up to the room and once that door closed, we started rolling in laughter because it was such a tense moment. At that time, I'm walking up and I'm thinking, if I bring them all the way up to my room, can they search it? All these things were going through my drug-addled mind at the time. So, I went up and sat down for a couple hours and by noon, I was back down drinking beer by the pool, so it was no big deal. All's well that ends well.

Todd: With a Ph.D. in clinical psychology, have you ever been tempted to evaluate your own band members?

Lane: No. I don't do that. Honestly. I don't do that with my friends, and, hopefully, they don't do that with me.

Todd: And also your personal relation-

thing. You know, I think there's a common sort of problem with people who grow up in small towns. There's a limited number of things that you might come across, especially if you don't have access to a bigger city nearby or that type of thing.

Todd: How far away was the biggest city?

Lane: About sixty miles. Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Todd: In the long run, do you think that's a benefit? Do you think you're more resistant to trends — like pop punk and now emo — because there's more of a foundation set?

Lane: I think, across the board, it's because Erik and Paddy and Billy listen to pretty diverse things in punk. They're not listening to the same sorts of bands. I come from something that's probably completely different from the three of them, but yet connected in some ways, too, because it's not like those guys never listened to metal or classic rock or some of the other things, too. We probably bring a more diverse range of influences, so it's harder, maybe, to see where the influences are coming from.

Erik: Bands that really fit, that are card-carrying members of their specific genre — for example — when you have four guys who are all the biggest into screamo in the entire town, and they get together and start a screamo band, you're not going to get much else than what you've heard before. I

a member of the band, you don't really understand, but it's one of those extra little things that pins you down in another area.

Erik: I know in one way that is specifically Otis Redding. It's one of those times where the band, in the early tours, would definitely stop being punk as far as what we were listening to constantly. I remember — everyone's always been down with Otis Redding — when all of us really started getting into him, really into listening to him, that's sort of a big departure 'cause, all of a sudden, instead of listening to Jawbreaker and a lot of the punk bands that we agreed on, we have this other thing that we're all listening to all the time and we're finding really refreshing. Johnny Cash, we hit a period.

Lane: Motown in general.

Todd: He's the only musical artist you've named directly, correct?

Erik: In a song, yeah. We also took a Billy Bragg lyric, just straight-up took it.

Todd: Do you remember what the lyric was?

Erik: Yeah. "Mixing pop and politics, he asked me what the use is." That's a Billy Bragg lyric, but we didn't cite it to him.

Todd: "And I'll die the day I find I'm fucking useless?" (From the song, "The Great American Going Out of Business Sale.")

Erik: Yeah, yeah. We kind of continued the sentiment. Billy Bragg — Lane and Billy weren't into him so much —

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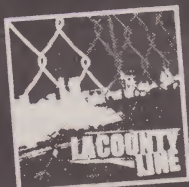
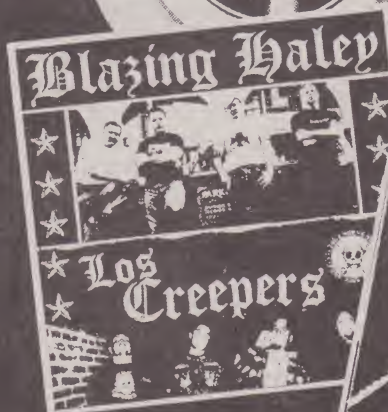
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but me and Paddy have been way, way, way into fuckin' Billy Bragg and that's another huge influence as far as songwriting. Because of Gerty (the non-drinking, non-smoking roadie, who's still with D4, from the very first tours) traveling with us, he's into a lot of mountain music, country music, and folk music. All of a sudden, we want to listen to Woody Guthrie, and we want to listen to Roger Miller.

Todd: Why are so many punk rockers so scared of being influenced by other things

that makes you sort of obsessed with that music. Consequentially, many people go through a period where you become a fucking snob about that music and that's essentially what it is. You meet someone who kind of likes jazz, you can talk about jazz. You meet someone who's a freak about jazz, they're no fun.

Todd: What steps have you taken to not become that person? At times, against my best efforts, I'm a snob.

extent.

Lane: I think there are some people into punk who are worried that if somehow you touch something mainstream, punk is going to be co-opted even more. I say, why not co-opt things from mainstream and make them punk?

Todd: My whole thing is access; have what we do available, and given the opportunity, drag new people into what we're doing.

Erik: Not to the point of trying to write your one poppy hit song so that you can convince people to listen to your other stuff, not really to that extent. Like with any other genre of music, it's interesting to see the first times we heard punk mixing with country. The first times we heard punk mixing with rap, it was interesting. It turned into something that's less interesting, is one way to say it, but it's always interesting to see the first times that that's done, when you see someone who's found a new thing that really hasn't been tried yet. Usually, the initial stuff is a.) pretty popular and b.) interesting and good. I always think that's cool.

Todd: What's the Twin

Cities Pop Mafia?

Lane: It's a series of tattoos on people's arms.

Erik: There was a time when there were all these bands in the Twin Cities — and there still is — but there was a particular, larger group of bands that were more on the pop side of the punk thing. Very few of them were actually pop punk bands. It was

Billy: Oh, Jesus. Contrary to popular belief, I never was a classical cellist.

DILLINGER FOUR

that could never be considered punk rock? Lane admits that he likes Neal Pirt of Rush's drumming. A lot of people would say, "Fuck you, poser. You're not punk to the core."

Erik: Punks, in most cases, like any music-based subculture, they're very into music. They don't just passively know about music. They just don't have stuff that their friends play for them and the radio. If you get into punk music — this was more so true in previous years and it gets a little less true as it becomes more available — but you have to be an active participant in it and

Erik: Well, I think I have been that person at times.

Todd: I think age has something to do with it.

Erik: Age is part of it. I've definitely gone through times when I loved nothing more than to completely bash anyone else's musical opinion as mainstream and boring, and trite and useless. I'm that person in the past, but not for many years, so when I do meet punks who I think are pretty closed minded about outside influences, I know where they're coming from and they'll probably grow out of that to a certain

one of those goofy things that people start talking about. "We're the Twin Cities Pop Mafia." Frank and Norm and various other people in Minneapolis started designing up little tattoos for it and making shirts. It was kind of like a fun thing to have. No sort of organization to it.

Lane: I think it reflects the sense of community that there is in Minneapolis. Even though it's not a serious organization or it's not defined in any serious way, it reflects that people from all types of different scenes in the cities are hanging together.

Todd: You guys have always

RAZORCAKE 51

been very supportive of bands that aren't genre specific, but at least share your ethics. Atmosphere and Lifter Puller come immediately to mind. You guys turned me on to them.

Erik: Every band winds up with their counterpart band. For us, at first, that was Scooby Don't and that was the most obvious because they were the only pop punk band doing a lot in Minneapolis. Then and an early band called Dirt Poor, we fit right in with. They would help us on the few shows that they were getting and when we started to be able to get shows, we would do the same.

Todd: Dirt Poor. That's the guy who's doing the label Slamdance Cosmopolis now?



time you had as a kid?

Lane: I always liked the sheet over the head with the two eyeholes cut out. No fuss, no muss. Get out and collect the candy and get on with life.

Todd: Lane, do you have any interest in doing other things, musically?

Lane: For a long time, I've been talking about doing my side project, Spankray, which would be a ripoff of a lot of different things and one of things where I get a lot of different people who play a lot of different things to come and participate on it. I want to do a 7" and see what happens.

Todd: What would be the focus, theme, or idea?

Lane: I'd like to do a concept record

ment tents on a platform. It was storming like crazy. It's the first night there. I was pretty young. I was probably like ten or something.

Weebo (the driver): He's probably like fifteen.

Erik: Yeah. Storming. I woke up in the middle of the night. It was probably four thirty in the morning. There was a crazy thunderstorm going on. I have to shit like crazy. I have no idea where the outhouse is, but I know it's storming everywhere and it's off in the woods somewhere. I wasn't entirely afraid of the dark, but reasonably freaked out, just with the thunder. I kind of do the "lay there and pretend that it will go away," forever. Finally, I'm at that point where I'm like, fuck it. I gotta go. I make a mad dash for it and I fuckin' just load my pants — piss and shit them completely. So, I

Erik: There was a petition to put Ronald Reagan on Rount Mushmore? Wait. Rount Mushmore? Woo, I talkie goodie. Hello?

DILLINGER FOUR

Erik: Yeah, which is a phrase that's Paddy's been saying since he was fourteen. I love the fact that it's actually used for something now.

Todd: It's a Clash lyric, isn't it? (From the song "Ghetto Defendant.") The lyrics were written by Allen Ginsburg.)

Erik: Yeah, it is. Paddy's always used that phrase constantly. And then after that, it was The Strike. Three out of five shows we were playing in town, we were probably playing with The Strike. It was really weird for people at first, when all of a sudden our counterpart band became Lifter Puller. But it was a really cool thing in Minneapolis. At first, people didn't know what to make of them. They were really more of a bar band at the time and we started getting them all ages shows and we would do some twenty-one and over ID shows and that was a really cool and fun time. It wound up even enlarging. In Minneapolis, the punk scene has always been tolerant of each other's band — but all of a sudden, it opened up an even larger spectrum. Like, wow, here's this kind of indie rock band, but because we were playing together, we'd go to their shows when we weren't playing, and all of a sudden, you'd be seeing the same people. And vice versa. We would play a more bar-ish sort of place, and there's more indie rocker types that started to catch on. There's a lot of bands in Minneapolis that we never really got on with or just never wound up hooking up and doing anything with, but regardless of specifically what punk genre you're in or anything like that, if we like the band, we want people who like us to know about that band. We've never been shy about it.

Todd: What was the best Halloween cos-

and the concept would be to sell a lot of them... I'm teasing, you know? I think it would be a fun thing to do. I don't know if it'll come to fruition or not.

Todd: Besides the actual Ramones performance, what other direct Ramones reference has been in *The Simpsons*?

Billy: [deliberating] I've been thinking of Homerpalooza.

Erik: I think it's the episode where Bart and Milhouse drink the crazy Squishees and they're having their freakout. Or, it's when Homer takes the fucking chili pepper...

Todd: The Guatemalan insanity pepper, and?...

Erik: I can't remember what part of the freakout. I can't remember who it is who said it, but he's having this acid freakout from it and he's talking to someone and someone's, "gabba, gooba, gabba, hey."

Todd: You're right on track. Homer's looking at Flanders, who's saying a lot of gibberish, then says, really clearly, "Gabba gabba hey."

Erik: I watch insane amounts of *Simpsons*.

Lane: I thought you were trying to make us look good in this interview.

Erik: Two or three episodes a day for years, but I smoke a lot of weed when I do it.

Todd: Did any of you ever go to camp?

Erik: I went to a Boy Scout camp for few years, during junior high. My last year of Boy Scout camp, I bought a bunch of weed and just sat around for a week and got high in the woods.

Lane: Erik, I think you need to tell your loading your underpants at camp story.

Erik: It was my first night at one of the Boy Scout camps, which just had tents, not cabins, but they were kind of like perma-

duck into — I don't remember if I went back into the outhouse. I had a bunkmate in my tent, so I'm sure I didn't go in there to take care of it. I was fairly embarrassed. So I pulled my underpants off and fuckin' winged them off into the woods, just figuring no one will ever know it was me. I came back. The guy who was in my tent hadn't woken up, so I figured I was pretty much in the clear. The next day, one of the old campers is poking around in the woods and finds this loaded up, nasty fuckin' piece of underwear. "What the fuck is this?" Right there, in fuckin' magic marker: "Erik Funk" written right on.

Todd: I'm sorry.

Lane: That experience went on to be written in the song, "Who Didn't Kill Bambi?"

Erik: Did it?

Lane: No. A little drummer humor going on.

Todd: Billy, what did Vickie Casey of the *Star Tribune* get wrong about you?

Billy: Oh, Jesus. Contrary to popular belief, I never was a classical cellist.

Erik: You look nothing like Aaron Lloyd, the guy who played Billy for that interview.

Lane: Billy wasn't there and the *Star Tribune* said that they were going to buy us free dinner and free drinks, and my friend Aaron was around. We asked him, "Why don't you just pretend to be Billy?" He goes and fills in some details — most of them inaccurate — and after the interview, we proceed to smoke some weed or hash or whatever with Vickie. We smoked her out. Actually, it was Aaron who smoked her up out in the car. The next day, the story was getting ready to run. She'd gone and looked at pictures on the album or something.

Billy: I went out to the car. I heard you

guys were smoking weed. I went up to Aaron, and he was like, "Hey Billy, what's up, dude?"

Lane: That was another piece of it, but then when she finally figured out that Billy was Billy, and Aaron wasn't Billy, she freaked the fuck out. She was very angry.

Erik: She talked to us about integrity.

Lane: And talking about how they weren't going to run the story and this and that. Big fuckin' deal. We could give a shit. But I also think she was also a little intimidated because she'd gotten good and high with us, too.

Erik: They had sent over the photographer to take the pictures for the story, and she was like, "So, I'm looking at the pictures, and that guy in the picture isn't the Billy who I interviewed."

Todd: What's the longest ruse you've ever pulled on anyone?

Paddy: The band.

Todd: So, Erik, when you were in high school, were you ever asked to go to drug counseling, due to your eyes looking so sunken?

Erik: I had to go to a bunch of other shit, but I always managed to conceal my drug use. I denied everything and I never got busted with any drugs. I did get tricked. I had to see a bunch of different people and at one point, I had to go downtown to see this guy who was the head of Northwestern's psychological program for adolescents. I got down there. He worked at an in-patient place, so I had a total freakout. I was pretty sure that I was being committed at that point because I looked around. "In-patient?" And I'm looking at all of these other teenagers walking around. Fuck this. I bolted for the door. They had to run after me and convince me that I wasn't being committed. That turned out to not be drugs. I think most of my high school problems weren't actually drugs, but if they would have had any reason to suspect I was doing any drugs, they would have written them all off to them. So, I got lucky on that.

Todd: So, Paddy, your dad was a longshoreman, correct?

Paddy: Yep.

Todd: Was he union?

Paddy: Oh, yeah. Well, he was a dock boss for the last fifteen years of his life, which is kinda like working the counter, becoming the manager.

Todd: What kind of ethics did he instill in you?

Paddy: It's funny because the things he instilled in me are almost cliché nowadays and I'm almost embarrassed to say them. Songs, like "Superpowers Enable Me to Blend in with the Machinery" and "The Great American Going Out of Business Sale," that's all my dad's influence; very much a working man's view of the world.



You can hate the country, but you don't necessarily hate the people, you know what I mean?

Todd: Did he hate the country?

Paddy: Oh, yeah. He really did get out of the army, all that stuff. I think he was a pretty good example of that '50s/'60s period of Jersey City/New York City. He didn't have a racist bone in him, but he hated rich people. If anything, his world view is a little distorted to what degree he hated rich people. He was very distrustful. That entire

side of my family is nothing but longshoremen, and at one time, a lot of them were cops. A lot of that side of my family, there was also a lot of involvement in organized crime and all sorts of stuff. But I'd say mostly not being embarrassed if someone's got to work for a living, which I think came in really handy for me, somewhere around early junior high. When fashion, style, and "toys" come into play, I was being very solidified with not being obsessed with that. I got that from my dad. But my dad was a little bit too much into the ladies. That's why my folks got divorced. There was a long stretch where I had no respect for him, too.

Todd: Erik, how did your parents — who are both academics — feel when you dropped out of high school?

Erik: Yeah, I just kind of gave up on high school, which, in turn, high school gave up on me. I eventually finished and I managed to finish in four years. I was lucky because my older brother was a dumb shit. By comparison, no matter how bad I was with most things, he was always capable of doing something way worse. As far as academics, he was a lot stronger — as far as not fucking around too much and completing his work. But I think they knew I read on my own. They knew that it wasn't like I didn't have any intellectual desire, promise, or anything like that. They understood my problem was with book work and daily homework. I didn't give a shit about that kind of stuff. I don't think they were ever concerned that I was mindless or that different than them, not having any academic interests.

Todd: I have to admit that the first time I came across the writer Nelson Algren was because you mentioned him in your song, "Doublewhiskeycoke-noice."

Erik: There's a lot of people who've said that.

Todd: And I was kind of ashamed, because literature was what I got my masters in and his name never came up. It's amazing that he's taken out of the canon altogether. Here's a guy who sold 500,000 copies of *Walk on the Wild Side* less

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than fifty years ago and he's basically forgotten.

Paddy: And it's kind of ironic, too, because you have Hemingway, who never swayed in popularity or respect and he said that Algren was the second greatest American writer of his generation, because, of course, Hemingway thought he was the first. That's the stuff that blows my mind.

Erik: So many writers refer to Algren. The greats of that period.

Todd: With this band, there were two members who had a hard time getting through high school, but you comprise of one of the most intelligent and politically informed bands I've ever heard. And I'll quote Paddy here, you're political, "Not in a late-period Crass sensibili-



Paddy: ... oh, the Scared of Chaka show in Denver I had dyed pubic hair. I was naked there. Well, that isn't true. I had sneakers and sunglasses on.

DILLINGER FOUR

ty, but in a Bruce Springsteen sensibility." How did that come about? It's not completely bookish. It's not a bad xerox copy of a half-assed political pamphlet. Where did those well formed ideas come from?

Erik: I know that I didn't really start to pay attention to politics, and in particular start becoming interested in leftist politics and not mainstream politics, until middle high school, and around the era of Born Against. There were the bands that were starting to pique my interest in that kind of stuff. It really came from punk bands.

Todd: Billy, have you learned anything, politically, from being in this band?

Paddy: Don't pass out with your shoes on.

Billy: Yeah, no shit.

Todd: Why don't you pass out with your shoes on?

Lane: That's the rules.

Paddy: Because that means people are allowed to fuck with them.

Billy: If you fall asleep with your shoes on, you just passed out. If you take your shoes off, you're going to bed.

Erik: Good advice.

Paddy: Not to answer Billy's question, but I think you were already in tune with exactly the way we all were. That's why we wanted Billy in so bad. Everything from the non-dogmatic leftist leanings to the sarcasm. You were already there, man. You did a great job on your own.

Todd: What publication has quoted you the most inefficiently?

Paddy: Most inefficiently?

Todd: Well, I read a quote, again in the *Star Tribune*, that states: "The group is steadfast in its pursuit on how to be punk." That just doesn't sound like anything you'd be close to saying. [laughter]

Lane: I don't think any of us said that. I think there were a lot of inaccuracies in that article, separate from the fact that we had someone playing Billy.

Erik: In my experience, a lot of the time, it does seem like the larger the publication, the sort of the less specific, the less carefully the quotes are used. With a lot of the smaller ones, it's almost too careful, where it's printed exactly how someone talks, that it doesn't make sense. You can't always punctuate properly the way someone speaks. I think, about eighty percent of the time, unless it was an email interview, I'll go back and I'm like, that's not really what I said, or that's only part of what I said. I feel that's pretty common.

Lane: Sort of interesting editing that can go on.

Paddy: I think a lot of times, it's just hearing the wrong thing. The entire "can" replaced with "can't," and "would" with "wouldn't," drives me fucking crazy and that happens a lot.

Erik: Because that totally changes everything, you know?

Paddy: A couple of these California weeklies have been pretty foul. They'll ask you, point blank, "So, why do you guys hate the Warped Tour?" Your response will be,

"Well, we don't hate the Warped Tour. We just don't feel it's right for us." But then you'll get some California weekly, and not necessarily in quotes, but the comment will be, "Absolutely in defiance of all things Warped Tour. Dillinger Four has committed themselves to fighting the Warped Tour."

Lane: We can't say that it's not uncommon.

Todd: Paddy, weren't you in a bar, naked?

Paddy: I don't think so... oh, the Scared of Chaka show in Denver I had dyed pubic hair. I was naked there. Well, that isn't true. I had sneakers and sunglasses on. I don't know. It was just something fun to do. The Gerty made me do it.

Todd: Paddy, whatever became of the petition to place Ronald Reagan onto Mount Rushmore?

Erik: There was a petition to put Ronald Reagan on Rount Mushmore? Wait. Rount Mushmore? Wooo, I talkie goodie. Hello?

Paddy: There was a petition for it on the internet, but I never heard anything more about it, though. Amphetamine Reptile got it. It was just one of those things where people were sending out to random emails. I was very upset that it didn't happen. I feel very strongly that Ronald Reagan should be up there.

Lane: I think it was actually Ronald Reagan's idea, but then he forgot to pursue it.

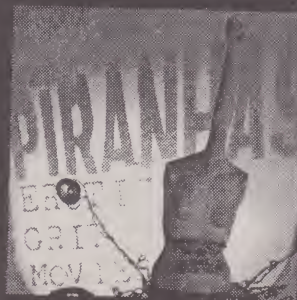
[laughter]

Paddy: I don't know if the mountain's that big, either. Couldn't get the hair.

Todd: What's the most



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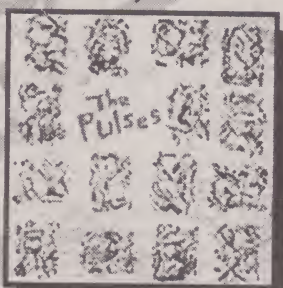


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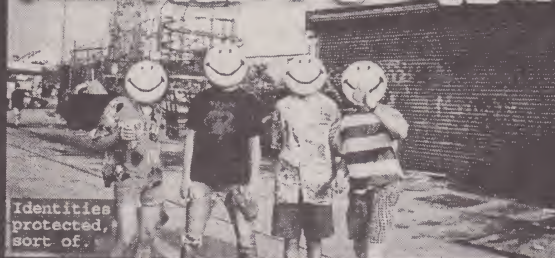
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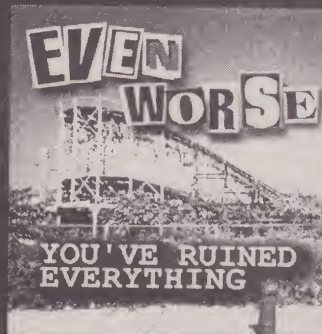
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scathing criticism you've received that you could kind of get their point?

Lane: One time, many years ago, someone came to check out our band in our hometown and it was one of those over-the-top drunk shows, where I'm not even sure if we really played songs or not, and apparently when he left the quote was, "I've never felt more ripped off in my life."

Paddy: He's in that band, The Rank Strangers. Show comments, though, I don't really take to heart because our shows vary so much. If somebody sees one of the particularly crazy ones, and is like, "That sucked," well, they're just not into those kinds of shows. We are. Whatever.

Erik: Not scathing criticism. I thinking of that thing in *Alternative Press* where it was talking about *Versus God*. It was something like, "This doesn't break one iota of musical ground..."

Todd: "Dillinger Four isn't exactly groundbreaking. There's nothing genius about the four"? Is that the quote?

Erik: Something like that, but it was actually a good review. That was just a part of it.

Todd: The quote I found was off of <www.aversion.com>.

Lane: There was absolutely nothing groundbreaking about that comment.

Erik: I think someone who listens to a lot of punk would realize we don't sound like a lot of other punk bands. I think there was something very similar to that in *AP* — I still think I'm talking about *AP* ("Versus God may not break a square foot of new ground (at barely over a half-hour, it scarcely has time to break anything), but for the iconoclast punk faithful, Dillinger Four have more than enough piss and vinegar to go around.") We're fast and we're all that. That makes sense. But that's not particularly scathing. We're not losing sleep over it.

Paddy: I bet that guy could probably go into great detail explaining how Aphex Twin sounds different than the Chemical Brothers.

Erik: Exactly. I could see where someone like that wouldn't notice the differences.

Todd: Erik, how many free gay beers do you give away at the Triple Rock (the bar that Erik co-owns and co-operates)?

Paddy: Free gay beers?

Todd: Don't they have the cards? The gay discount booklet card?

Lane: What? Gay people are getting free beers now?

Erik: It's a crazy world we live in. We just signed up in *The Source*. They have it in a lot of different cities. People who have a Source card get a free tap or well if they come. It's an advertising thing.

Todd: Kind of like a coupon book.

Paddy: Why are you being so hetero-phobic?

Erik: We just put that in. Anyone can get one. You don't have to be gay to have it. It's just the gay Yellow Pages, all gay-friendly businesses listed in it. The weird thing is that the only person who's come in so far, came in before this thing was out. We hadn't even

told the staff about it yet. We got this call at home: "There's some lady here, saying that she has some card that gets her a free forty?" "I don't think so." You know what I mean?

Paddy: Well, it was only because you told me about it the night before and I was just kind of testy because the skirt was so tight.

Todd: Have any "famous" punk rockers been expelled from the Triple Rock?

Erik: Yeah. Paddy Costello. [laughter] Billy Morrisette. [laughter] The roadie for GBH. Scared of Chaka. I'm cool with them. They can come in now. The main guy, Karl — who was in GBH, Broken Bones, also in Billyclub.

Todd: He's the guy who was in Conflict, too.

Erik: ...Also Frankie Stubbs of Leatherface needed to be told to leave. If no one did, we were asleep at the switch.



Lane: You've got to work pretty hard to get thrown out of the Triple Rock, by virtue of the fact that I never have been. That speaks volumes.

Paddy: Those are pretty bold terms, being that you're the only guy on this side of the table who hasn't been ejected. You got to put a little effort in there. Come on, son.

Erik: There are lot of people who have been questionable. Jerry Cantrell and some crappy metal dudes who were being royal fucking cocks. They were asked to leave.

Paddy: He was in Alice in Chains?

Erik: Yeah.

Paddy: He should have been asked to leave, just for that.

Todd: What's the most you've ever eaten in one sitting?

Paddy: I think it was that time in Reno with the boneless pork tenderloin. I ate eighteen of them, with mashed potatoes and cokes. It was crazy. I went to town. I've never been so sick. We had to play that night, too.

Todd: Paddy, how many hot dogs do you cut and mix with chili, all on top of a pizza?

Paddy: I tend to go all out, so I'll just do a package of ten hot dogs. A family-size can of chili. One will do the trick. If you throw the hot dogs on there, that's pretty hardcore.

Todd: Paddy, did your interest in under-

ground music start with hip hop?

Paddy: I got into punk and hip hop at almost exactly the same time. Erik and I were lucky enough that we grew up in Evanston, Illinois, and WNUR, which is Northwestern's college station, around 1984 was awesome. The hip hop shows were phenomenally great and there was a punk show that was called "Fast and Loud," that was fucking great. A lot of record collectors would probably know, because they're the people who put out the *Big Hits of Mid-America* comp, so I got into them at the same time, but that's why, to me — Billy and I talk about this a lot — underground hip hop and punk rock go hand in hand. That's why I hated it in the '90s, when they'd say, "Hip hop is the punk of the '90s." No. Hip hop is the hip hop of the '90s and punk is the punk of the '90s. But, technically, and I'm not

DILLINGER FOUR

being racist when I say this because I've read it through other hip hop journalists, and I think it's still true: "Hip hop is the black kid's punk and punk is white kid's hip hop."

It's cool because there's a big crossover there, at the same time. I remember having comp tapes that were Sugar Hill Gang and the early Run DMC records on one side and Battalion of Saints, and the *Somebody Got Their Head Kicked In* comp on the other.

Erik: I got into hip hop first, break dancing and stuff like that, and I kind of got out of it again before I got into punk and back into hip hop again.

Paddy: Especially when hip hop became more political, we got really into it. When Eric B. and Rakim got really hard, and when Public Enemy came around, that's when I remember a ton of punks and hardcore kids getting into it.

Erik: I remember when I was first getting into punk was around the time I was first hearing *Fear of a Black Planet*. Then *It Takes a Nation of Millions to Hold Us Back* came out. PDP. All this political hip hop when I was first hearing political rock.

Paddy: Paris.

Erik: So fuckin' bad ass.

Paddy: Hell, yeah.



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THE ARRIVALS

A GARDENER, A FREE-FLOWING MC, AND TWO GUYS NAMED DAVE
EMBARK ON THE WAR ON PORCELAIN TOUR

INTERVIEW BY MEGAN PANTS AND TODD

RONNIE DICOLA—DRUMS BIG DAVE KAKTIS—BASS LITTLE DAVE MERRIMAN—GUITAR, VOCALS
ISAAC THOTZ—VOCALS, GUITAR

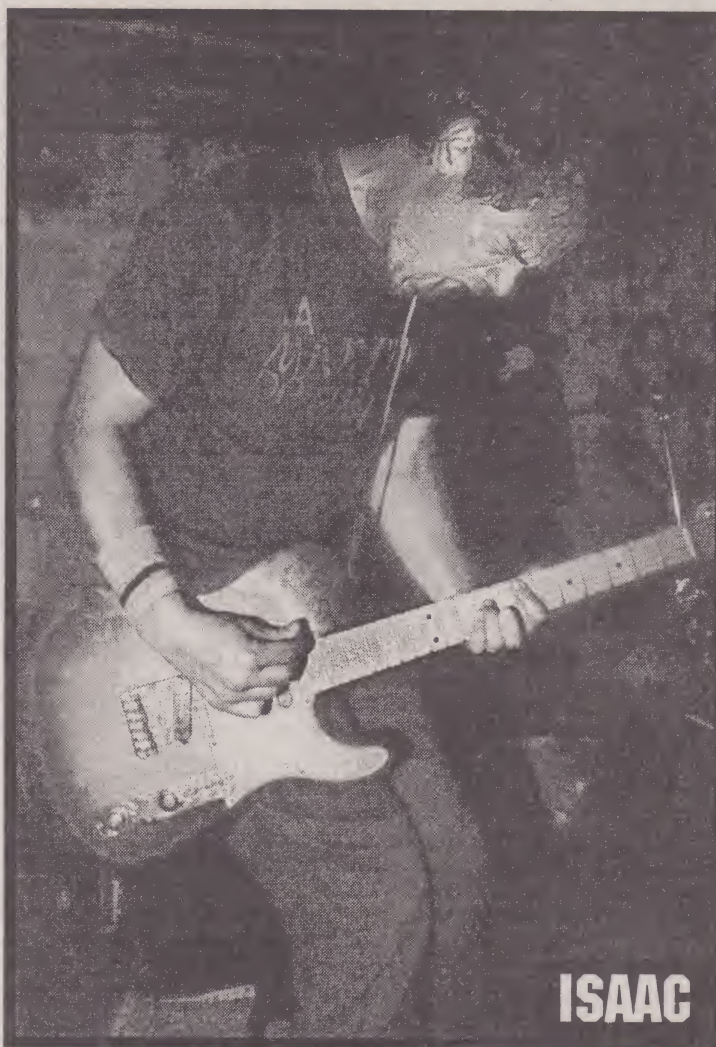
It's hard not to cringe a bit at all of the new ways that "punk" is finding to fit itself into conversations. I've always had a relatively loose definition of what fell under its umbrella. Hell, I wouldn't even call myself punk. Sure, I like punk rock. I wear Converse and have a bad haircut (no offense to my personal bathroom barber). I'm not the nicest person you'll meet and my hygiene's not so great. I may be bit of a scumbag but I'm just not punk. I like what I like, whatever it is.

That's where the Arrivals come in. They'll be the first to tell you that they don't know where their punk classification comes in. They're more likely to be listening to Muddy Waters, Wu-Tang Clan, or Led Zeppelin than whatever is gracing some punk top twenty list. Sure, they like the Ramones and Pegboy, but it doesn't just simply begin and end there.

I first heard the Arrivals when my friend Sean brought their CD, *Goodbye New World*, back with him after playing with them in Chicago. Practically every time I'd ride in his car, I'd have him put it on. When I got my own copy, I don't think I went a day without listening to it for almost a year. Something new always grabbed me.

Their sound is original. No two folks can put the same finger on it. People seem to hear what they want to hear. There's fleeting bits of The Thumbs, bits of Articles of Faith, bits of the Ventures, and bits of Eddie Cochran. When it's all said and done, though, I just hear The Arrivals. They'll be who I compare other bands to from now on.

Although they've been together for the better part of a decade, they're just getting around to releasing their second record, *Exenator Orange*. It isn't out of any sort of



laziness. What ever happened to the idea, that instead of squeezing out songs like toothpaste to keep your label smiling brightly, of making those the best songs you can record? It's apparent they haven't lost their touch. It gives me such a good feeling that something this good is in there amongst all the pseudo-pop-punk-glam-core-revivalist shit coming out, all thinking *they* are the ones to resurrect punk from the grave of the eighties. I've got news for them: It never died. The Arrivals are one of the strongest in the legions who are not revitalizing, but rein-

venting, what punk rock can be.

Ironically, they'd broken up for all intents and purposes. The band just didn't seem to be in the cards. Isaac was gearing up into go to the Peace Corps. Big Dave, Little Dave, and Ronnie had a gig playing in a blues band. Life was alright. Enter life's intangibles, mix in an invitation to play with Dillinger Four, double check the chemistry's all bubbling, and dang it, you've got the second coming of The Arrivals, a resurrection worth celebrating.

Megan: You guys are from Chicago, right?

All: Yes.

Megan: So where the fuck are you surfing? [laughter]

Isaac: You can't even swim in Lake Michigan.

Todd: Well how did the song "Surf Riot" come, then?

Little Dave: It was one of the first songs that we wrote and we wanted to write a surfy sounding song. Then we came up with a riff, it was actually Pat from the Matics, and me and him then — because Dave Kaktis wasn't in the band yet — just started writing the song and Isaac wrote the lyrics.

Isaac: We were just joking around.

Little Dave: "Hey guys, wouldn't it be fun if we had a surf riot?" That's seriously what the whole song is about.

Todd: How do you make your music sound like your lyrics mean something?

Little Dave: I don't know, because some of them don't. Some of them do. We oftentimes write the songs first and then freestyle the lyrics until we have something. We'll be playing them live for months and months without any lyrics, just mushmouthing them. Todd: Are the printed lyrics different from the actual lyrics that you play now? Little Dave: Sometimes. We hardly even printed the lyrics. If you can read them, bravo.

Todd: I had someone actually find them and transcribe them for me.

Isaac: That's scary. Our lyrics actually mean something now. On the new album there'll be some content to the songs.

Little Dave: Not that there's none with the old stuff. I feel bad just writing it off.

Todd: What do the Arrivals and Gary Sinise have in common?

Isaac: I met Gary Sinise's brother once. He tried to sell me a drill. I was out doing yard work and he's like, "Hey man, you wanna buy a drill?"

Little Dave: I'm his third or fourth cousin. I've never met him or anything.

Todd: You guys are from the same area, correct?

Little Dave: Yeah, we all grew up in northwest Indiana or the south side Chicago.

Todd: You guys are from Blue Island?

Little Dave: Yeah.

Isaac: His brother is a hobo in Blue Island. He's a homeless guy who walks around.

Little Dave: That doesn't make any money off *Of Mice and Men*.

Megan: Enuff Znuft is from there too, right?

Little Dave: Yup. Don't ask.

Todd: Do you cover Enuff Znuft yet?

All: No.

Megan: It's interesting because *The Shepherd Express* said that you have a "...head pounding rhythm section inspired by '80s hair metal bands." That was a positive review.

Little Dave: Oh my god.

Megan: Yup, a glowing review.

Little Dave: We know our fair share. I mean we definitely know the Poison catalog, between me and Big Dave, in and out.

of us will be like, "This sounds like this or that." Then we'll screw around with it until it doesn't sound like it anymore. And then once we bring it to Ronnie and Dave—well, I can't say that, because it usually happens in the same room at the same time. Then they get the basis of it and they're doing the skeleton of the riff with the bass lines and me and Isaac just go stupid on top of that.

Ronnie: Usually, Dave and Isaac are usually the songwriters and then they'll bring something to me and Dave and we'll be like, "All

everybody who doesn't know the original idea, where that idea came from, everyone throws in what they want to do with the song and that way it ends up coming out different than just ripping someone off.

Little Dave: "Heavyweight" is a good example of that. That's on the album, isn't it?

All: Mmmhhhhmm.

Little Dave: With "Heavyweight," I wrote the original riff, and it was just me and Isaac in my living room, and Isaac was like, "Oh yeah, I have a vocal idea." And he starts going through it and I found out that he was putting down beats in a completely different spot and it just sounded cooler, and that's how it ended up.

Todd: Are you the Dave Merriman who was in the Canadian band, Cousin Henry?

Little Dave: No. There was a Dave Merriman in something else?

Megan: What about Dave Merriman, physics major at the College of Wooster in Ohio?

Little Dave: No.

Megan: Well, are you at least the Dave Merriman who was bound and gagged at a radio station?

Little Dave: Yes.

Megan: What was that all about?

Little Dave: The Matics, ever since they started the band, there's been these guys, the Invisibles that come around. They always show up when the Matics aren't around. Me and my girlfriend were driving past the station. It's a college station—Saint Xavier on the South Side—it's actually in Chicago. We were just driving by and our friends had a show there so I was like, "Hey honey, you want to go to the station and just hang out and say hi to them?" We went in there and were sitting in there for twenty minutes and all of the sudden five guys with masks came in with water guns and duct tape and ended up taping us to chairs. They left my girlfriend alone. That's the reason



Q: WHAT TOY DID YOU WANT BUT NEVER GOT? LITTLE DAVE:

OH! THE OMNIBOT 2000. IT WAS THIS LITTLE PROGRAMMABLE RADIO CONTROLLED ROBOT THAT YOU COULD HAVE GET YOUR DRINKS FOR YOU AND SHIT.

RONNIE: HOLY SHIT, DUDE! ROCK THE FUCK OUT!

Todd: Taking into account that you've been compared to everything from a "punkified, XTC" to the Stranglers, do you think in your heart of hearts that you're creating original music?

Little Dave: We don't. Every song we do we think we're ripping off something. We don't know what, but we know it's something. We're always paranoid that somebody's going to think that we're doing this. We try hard not to.

Todd: What do you do to try not to?

Little Dave: We'll start a riff and then one

right." That's usually at practice. There's probably four or five different things I'll try to do on the drums. We're all collaborating on ideas; the same with the bass. We're—me and Dave—this is once like every thirty songs or something, we'll actually say, "Let's do this for a song." And these two (Isaac and Little Dave) will be like, "Okay, let's collaborate on it." It just comes together when we play, you know? Especially when these guys write a song, it just kind of happens. It just comes out the way it does.

Isaac: Even if we have an original idea,

they didn't get their asses kicked. They threw on a Matics CD and on the cover of the CD it says, "Consider this a warning." And just left. That was it.

Todd: Ronnie, you started drumming with The Arrivals when you were about fifteen?

Ronnie: Yeah, late fourteen, early fifteen years-old.

Todd: And you did the studio stuff for The Repellents?

Ronnie: That was when I was fifteen, too.

Todd: So how is it that—how old are you now?

Ronnie: Twenty-one.

Todd: How is it in that span of **RAZORCAKE 59**

time, that you've only released two readily available albums?

Ronnie: I don't feel a need to hurry up and put some shit out. I'd rather wait and have something that we're satisfied with come out. Within the past couple of years we've all had different shit going on that maybe took our focus away from the band for a little bit or drew our attention towards something else. I have to say, I don't care if an album doesn't come out for ten years. If it's a good album, it's a good album. If it's a bad album, it's a bad album.

Todd: Didn't you put out *Information from Cabal Headquarters*?

Ronnie: That was our first tape. That was

Megan: From everything I've heard, you're happily married, but so many of the songs are heartbreakers. Where does that come from?

Isaac: I don't know, I guess...

Little Dave: Most of those songs were written before.

Isaac: Yeah, they're old songs. I had a rough time before I was married.

Big Dave: Wait 'til our third album.

Isaac: We still have a couple heartbreak songs on this one, but they're just residue from past relationships.

Todd: Who is Amadou Diallo and why did you give a song to a comp in his memory?

Little Dave: Amadou Diallo is a guy who

would just be fun to come back like, "What's up now, motherfucker?" Smile at him real big.

Todd: What's the worst place you've had van trouble? Didn't you miss South By Southwest?

Little Dave: No, we missed a New York show because we were in New Jersey and the transmission fell out.

Big Dave: Not if you count the van trouble we're riding around in now, which is a minivan.

Little Dave: Yeah, our transmission got really messed up and we ended up having to rent a vehicle, which is why we're riding in a minivan now.

Big Dave: We junked our van in White Plains, New York in a junkyard.

Little Dave: With a guy who hangs out at the Coyote Ugly Bar. He's like, [in a New York accent] "Oh yeah, you guys are playin' in New York City tomorrow night? Alright! I'm going to that Coyote Ugly Bar!" I forgot what it was called, like Hogs and Heffers or something. He's like, "Yeah, I'm just divorced, so I'm gonna try to meet some ladies and blah blah blah. You guys are rock and roll? Oh, okay I'll go and blah blah blah."

Todd: You've had your van broken into, is that correct?

All: Yeah.

Todd: And the only things that were stolen were your duffel bags...

Little Dave: How do you know all of this? No, (Big) Dave's first guitar he ever had was stolen. It was this guitar that has this built-in speaker. My leather jacket, which I had just gotten back that day from the leather guy — I had the sleeves redone — that was stolen.

Isaac: I had a book bag.

Little Dave: Isaac lost his book bag with all his toiletries. And there was a TV and a Playstation in there that they didn't take.

Todd: Weird.

Little Dave: It was really weird.

Todd: Where was that?

Little Dave: That was in Detroit.

Todd: Was it broken into? Did they break the locks?

Little Dave: No, somebody forgot to lock the door.

Isaac: I wonder who that was?

Little Dave: I haven't the slightest.

Megan: So how does it feel to be one of the only bands of this era to say that they played with the "King"?

Little Dave: What?

Megan: You played with Jerry Lawler, right?

Little Dave: Yeah, I thought you said the Kinks. We were with the Bump 'N Uglies. Both of us played with Jerry "the King" Lawler.

Todd: How do you get to play with Jerry Lawler?

Little Dave: They invited us up. They do a rock and wrestling thing in Detroit once a year.

Todd: Is he an emcee?

Little Dave: They hired him in as the guest.



something we did when I was fifteen. We went in...

Little Dave: It was the same place they recorded The Repellents album, right?

Ronnie: Yeah.

Megan: Three songs off of that are also on *Goodbye New World*, right?

Big Dave: Re-recorded versions of them, though.

Isaac: I thought it was just two.

Little Dave: "Surf Riot," "Manifesto," and...

Megan: "Tornado."

Little Dave: Yeah, so three.

Ronnie: That's the only way I can answer that.

Little Dave: I can say severe writer's block.

Megan: Isaac, do you write most of the lyrics?

Isaac: Yeah, I wrote the lyrics for probably eight songs, maybe ten.

Little Dave: Out of the fifteen?

Isaac: Yeah.

was shot forty-one times by the New York police. He was unarmed. They found him suspect for something and shot him forty-one times when he was laying down after the first couple of shots, which were mortal wounds. We gave the song to the comp because Isaac's friend runs Failed Experiment. I wish we could sound more socially conscious. I learned that when we got the CD and I read it, to tell you the truth.

Todd: Little Dave, have you ever met a more rocking guitarist who has braces, such as yourself? Because I would have to say, in all my years, that you would have to be the number one guitarist in braces.

Little Dave: You know what? No. I take the crown. I got half of my grill back, though.

Todd: I saw. Because I saw you last year when you played with Toys That Kill and Tiltwheel.

Little Dave: I just got them off two weeks ago. Lane from D4 said he would drop off the tour if I still had braces. I thought it

They have their own independent wrestling federation.

Big Dave: We have some pictures we should send you.

Little Dave: Pictures of his door. It says, "Mr. Lawler Only" and a star drawn on the piece of paper and it's like a closet.

Big Dave: There's a picture with him and the door's half open and you can see the room. It's too funny.

Little Dave: It's so fucking funny.

Todd: How many chords do you think you can get away with before confusing punk rockers? I can count more than three in there already. How far are you willing to go?

Ronnie: Can I say something real quick? Seriously.

Big Dave: No, wait your turn.

Ronnie: Alright, go ahead, dude.

Little Dave: Until we sound like Rush.

Ronnie: Let me explain something. Music is music, okay? Me? I don't care how many fucking chords. I don't care how many fucking drum fills. I don't care how many whatever lyrics you put in a song. Music is music,

we do. I think it's just that we all have a deep will to rock as hard as we can and we're still young, so it's still going as fast as we can do it. I was just talking to Todd (Toys That Kill) over there and he was like, "Hey, do you know this band or this band?" I'm clueless. You can't talk to me about what band's on what label because most of 'em I hate. I hated Dillinger Four the first couple of times I listened to *Midwestern Songs* because I was putting every band guilty until proven innocent. It took me a while to figure out that they're doing something that I really enjoy. I just poo poo everything. I don't mean to sound snobby — I mean we're in the punk pantheon, or whatever — but we're clueless. That may be why we use more than three chords. We're not really influenced by that.

Ronnie: I like the Ramones. Then again, I like Metallica, too.

Little Dave: And they have movements. They have opuses. The old shit, anyway.

Ronnie: I mean I like the Wu Tang Clan, but then I'll rock out to the Pixies, too.

Big Dave: I'm more of a rocker. I like Led

I really have to find one when I get home.

Little Dave: They actually just quit their jobs right before we left.

Ronnie: Our fuckin' shitty bosses... me and Big Dave were playing in a blues band down the street from where we work and our boss gave me some shit and took me off from work and I said, "Hey man, do I work for you any more or not?" and he's like, "Well, I don't know. You played for the bar I was in competition with for twenty years." I was like, "You're a fucking child, dude."

Little Dave: To give a back story on that — Dave, Ronnie, and I have a blues band, too. We play the Blue Island bars and we played the bar right down the block.

Big Dave: It's a way to get extra cash and a way to have fun.

Little Dave: We pretty much tried to turn this place into a pretty rock'n'roll punk bar. They had Toys That Kill and Dillinger Four in the jukebox.

Ronnie: Naked Raygun, Pegboy. We just went in there and there were a bunch of local people who liked to drink after work. We

RONNIE: I DON'T CARE IF WE PUT FUCKING NINE CHORDS IN A SONG, DUDE. IF IT'S PUNK ROCK OR IF IT'S ROCK'N'ROLL, IT'S ROCK'N'ROLL OR PUNK ROCK.

BIG DAVE: THERE IS NO NINTH CHORD, DUDE.

man. I don't care if we put fucking nine chords in a song, dude. If it's punk rock or if it's rock'n'roll, it's rock'n'roll or punk rock.

Big Dave: There is no ninth chord, dude.

Ronnie: That's what I have to say.

Little Dave: I'm not sure if I know what the ninth is.

Ronnie: Who cares if there's fuckin' ten chords or three chords?

Big Dave: A good breakdown is that Isaac does all of the power chords, the rhythmic — the riffing it — and he plays more on the top of a chord.

Ronnie: Little Dave?

Big Dave: No, more like phrasing. There's a little more going on than just a straight-up barre chord. He does the hot licks. Isaac does the hot riffs and he (Ronnie) does the hot licks.

Ronnie: I'm just talking out of my mouth right now.

Little Dave: This is Ronnie DiLicks.

Ronnie: There is so much music that I go home and listen to. I enjoy everything. I go home and I fuckin' pop on Wu Tang. I mean, music is music. If there's something that you enjoy, that's what I think punk rock is all about. If there's something you enjoy, I don't give a fuck what anyone says, go fucking listen to what you want to listen to. Enjoy yourself.

Todd: I listen to a lot of Otis Redding and Johnny Cash, too.

Big Dave: Otis is my man!

Little Dave: We're not influenced by punk rock much, to tell you the truth. I don't even know how we end up sounding the way that

Zeppelin and AC/DC. I like the blues, too. We all listen to everything. We all bring whatever it is and... if it rocks, it rocks.

Little Dave: It just kind of happens that way when we're writing a song and when we're playing. There's so many different ways of looking at it. We don't have a unified way of, "Oh, we're trying to do this."

Todd: [big, important guy voice] "The 1977 thing. I really like the Vibrators' sound. We're trying to go with that."

Big Dave: Plug it in. Turn it up.

Todd: The only reason I interview bands ever is because I really like them. I mean, I only saw you guys play once and I got the CD. It's seriously been in rotation for about eight months.

Little Dave: We've got some new shit.

Todd: Everybody has to answer this one. How many times in a regular day do you check your clock?

Little Dave: I... don't... know.

Big Dave: Anytime you use your phone. I mean, we have our cell phones, so every time you pick it up, you look. We look a lot more in the last twelve days because of the time change.

Little Dave: We think we're gonna be late for every show.

Ronnie: When we're home — every morning as soon as I get up, I look at my clock, then a good five or six times a day I check what time it is.

Todd: What are your day jobs?

Little Dave: I work at a sign shop making cut vinyl details.

Ronnie: I discover the best ways to have sex in my room. That's my day job.

Big Dave: I have one little part time job, but

started to work there and bring a younger crowd in. We figured that, fuck dude, now the jukebox is nothing but the Pixies, Naked Raygun, D4, us, the Matics. It's bringing in that younger crowd. That's all over with, though, because the guy was pretty much a dickhead about us playing down the street, so we ended up quitting our job before we left. It's no big deal. Isaac does something with carpentry.

The Daves: Gardening.

Ronnie: That was his hobby, I thought.

Big Dave: It's his job, too.

Megan: Did you say gardening?

Little Dave: No joke.

Megan: Along those lines, there's a lot of horticultural references in your songs: "Lay sod where devils play" and "don't fallow my brain."

Little Dave: That's Isaac.

Megan: He's a green thumb?

Little Dave: To the bone.

Megan: How many times has someone tried to get all witty with you guys and ask, "Have you arrived yet?"

Little Dave: Fuckin', seriously, almost every place we go.

Todd: Two of you went to college, is that correct?

Little Dave: Isaac and I did. Well, Dave went to Columbia for a little bit.

Big Dave: I went to community college after high school and then took a break and went to Columbia in Chicago for a year.

Ronnie: I went to Moraine Valley for like two weeks.

Little Dave: That's the community college on the South Side.

Big Dave: I discovered that when you really want to get serious about it, **ROZELLE 61**



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because when you take out those loans — no, don't fuck around until you really know what you want to do. I realized that I didn't really want to do that. Someday. I don't know. Maybe, maybe not, though.

Todd: What's the last song you caught yourself singing in the shower?

Little Dave: "Unchained Melody" from the Righteous Brothers.

Ronnie: "I Got My Mojo Working" by Muddy Waters, or I just freestyle.

Big Dave: How does that go?

Ronnie, Little Dave and Megan: [singing and guitar sounds] "I got my mojo working, but it just don't work on you."

Big Dave: I don't know. I don't really sing too much in the shower.

Todd: What band bummed you out the most when you heard them do the soundtrack for a commercial? For instance, I got really bummed out when I heard the Buzzcocks do Toyota.

Little Dave: The Iggy Pop one, he had a couple. "Passenger" was on one and "Lust for Life" was on another. "Search and Destroy" was on one, too.

Todd: I mean you know it's going to happen, but it still bums you out.

Little Dave: The fact that Moby put a whole album out as commercials.

Todd: Really?

Little Dave: His *Play* album, he licensed every single song to a commercial.

Todd: I didn't know that.

Big Dave: He needed to pay the rent.

Todd: I guess the Vatican Commandos gig wasn't working out.

Little Dave: He's a fuckin' vegan. The food's expensive.

Todd: What was the one toy that you wanted so much as a kid but never got?

Little Dave: Oh! The Omnibot 2000. It

another one so fucking bad and my parents wouldn't get it for me.

Big Dave: My big two — again being the big, chubby guy — I always wanted one of those battery operated Powerwheels, those little cars. I never got one. I had a CHiPs motorcycle, but you had to pedal it. Everyone else had the cars, but I couldn't have that. Another one — I always wanted a remote controlled airplane. That would've been tight, but it didn't happen.

Todd: What movie do you find yourself quoting the most?

Little Dave: It's a mixture between *Blazing*

walking into the D4 trailer and going...

Ronnie: "I just want to tell you four good luck. We're all counting on you."

Little Dave: And then he'll leave and come back five minutes later and...

Ronnie: "I just want to tell you four good luck."

Megan: It's called Fuck, Marry, Kill. You have to put one of the following into each category.

Little Dave: Is this one of those psychological evaluations?

Big Dave: Marry as in getting married?

Megan: Yeah. You're working with Davey

RONNIE



ARRIVALS

RONNIE: I DISCOVER THE BEST WAYS TO HAVE SEX IN MY ROOM. THAT'S MY DAY JOB.

was this little programmable radio controlled robot that you could have get your drinks for you and shit.

Ronnie: Holy shit, dude! Rock the fuck out!

Little Dave: I wanted it so bad. It was like \$150 and my mom wouldn't get it for me for Christmas. I begged her and begged her. I went to my friend in Little League's house and he had it! I was jealous as fuck.

Todd: Did it really get the soda?

Little Dave: Well it wouldn't get it for you, it would just go there and grab it and had lit-up eyes, but that was enough — to send it into the kitchen and have your mom put a Kool-Aid on it and bring it back to you while you're watching cartoons. I really wanted it.

Ronnie: For a while between four and five, I had a little jacket. It was red and it looked just like Michael Jackson's from *Thriller*. After it didn't fit me anymore I wanted

Saddles, Brain Candy, and Safe Men.

Todd: What was the last one?

Little Dave: *Safe Men*. "Sweet 'stache, man." [high pitched voice] "Thanks, bro."

Ronnie: I'd say *Blazing Saddles* and *Four Rooms*.

Big Dave: For a time it was *Pulp Fiction*, but one movie I always like to quote is that one with Martin Lawrence and David Chappelle where he becomes a cop, but they're jewel thieves. David Chappelle's line goes like this: he makes like he knows kung-fu [kung-fu noises], "I'm gonna rip your lips off and kiss my ass with them shits."

Little Dave: And because Dave says it so much, I use "them shits" like, "Them shits is the shits."

Big Dave: Put a little topical spicing on shit.

Ronnie: Mine from *Four Rooms* is, "We ain't got no needles here, kid. Just a big fucking gun."

Little Dave: Oooh and *Airplane!* He's been

Tiltwheel, Paddy from D4, and Larry from Pegboy.

Little Dave: Paddy would be in the Fuck section.

Megan: No hesitation at all there!

Little Dave: Larry, would be in the Marry section, because he's just getting old. I don't even know if he's married, but he always complains about how old he is, so he's domesticated. Davey Tiltwheel, I think, would be in the Fuck section, too. The first thing he ever said to me, the first time I ever talked to this dude, he comes up to me and goes, "E-Funk played me your record, dude. That shit's better than good pussy." That's my lasting impression, so he's in the Fuck category.

Megan: But you have to put someone in Kill.

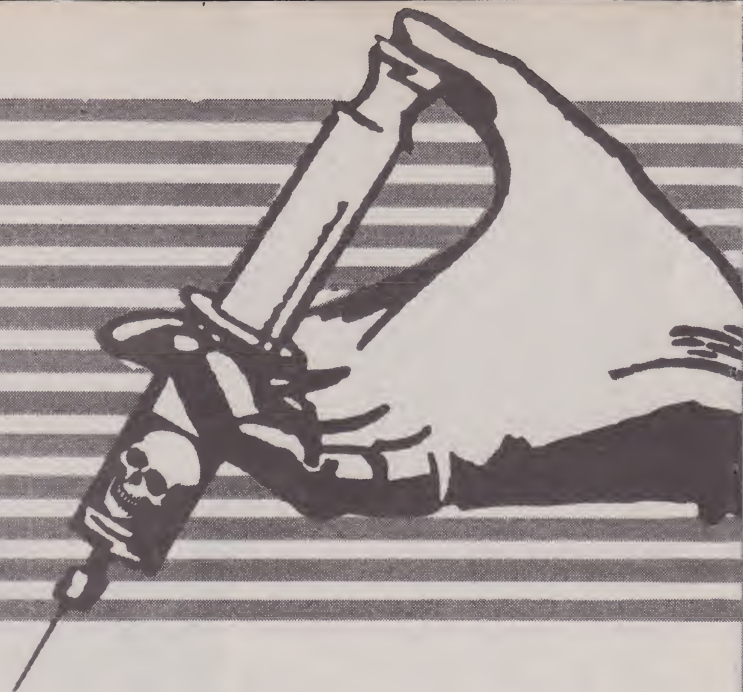
Little Dave: Kill somebody?

Megan: One of them has to die.

Little Dave: Larry, 'cause he's the oldest.



THE TWO FACES OF THE SKULLS



**Introduction by Petite Paquet.
Interview by Petite Paquet and Todd.
Designated Dale provided guidance.**

The first time I saw the Skulls, I expected to get that embarrassed feeling you get when you see your mom trying to dance like Brittany Spears. Let's admit it, there's not many bands that could fall into obscurity for twenty years, come back and not seem like some mid-life punk rocker's equivalent of buying a Porsche in a vain attempt to relive their youth. This isn't the case with The Skulls. Not only because Billy Bones hops around like a sixteen-year-old in heat but also because the notably younger guitar player, The Kidd, matches his enthusiasm. The rhythm section, Sean Antillon on drums and James "Hardslug" Harding on bass, is the picture of cool composure, although James is known to change from wig-to-wig between songs.

Billy Bones is the only remaining member of the original Skulls that played regularly at the Masque and is a good example that not all punk rockers end up growing up and become losers. James paid his dues with The Adicts in the '80s. Both remember how fucked up and great it was to be young while keeping in perspective that they're not eighteen anymore. They've held true to their ideals and aspirations for the future of punk rock without seeming nauseatingly clichéd and incoherent. If you've ever been to a Skulls show, you've seen the Kidd popping around like a firecracker while still playing the right chords. Sean Antillon now takes the mic on a verse of "Building Models" and doesn't miss a beat. It's definitely fucking strange that these four guys from completely different generations of punk rock would meet, hit it off so well, and put out music with great energy on record, let alone live.

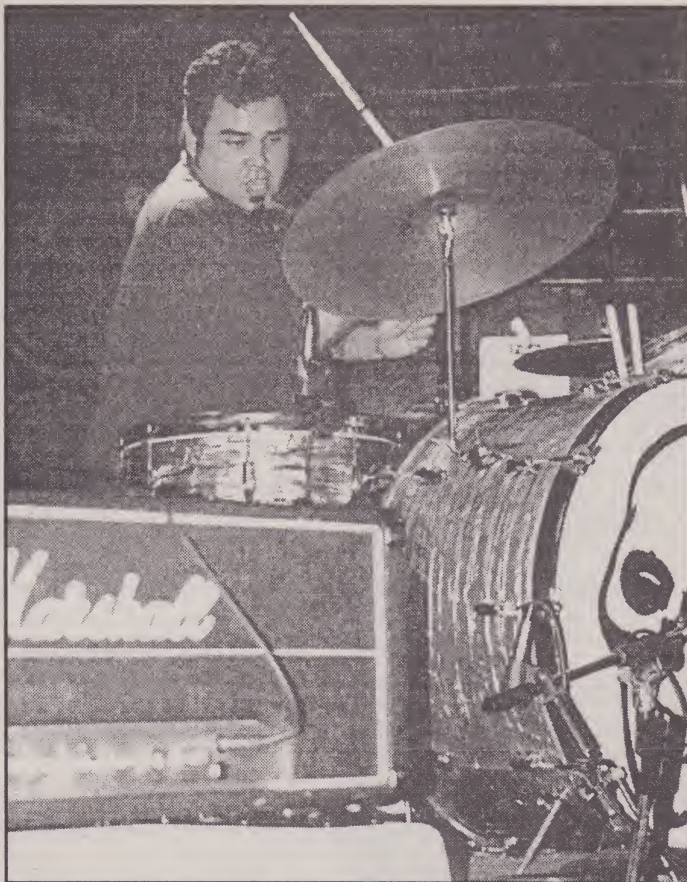
We sat in the back of Sean's pick-up truck and right away I got the impression that they were pretty content and put together as individuals. Don't expect



elder bashing from this interview. The Skulls are more than just holding on to old memories. They put back into perspective that punk rock was for good times and facing facts. They tell us that just 'cause you're over thirty it doesn't mean you have to literally stay stuck in your youth and just 'cause you're young it doesn't mean you could never relate to anyone over thirty.

The Skulls began in 1977 when Mick "Sten Gun" Wallace asked his good friend William Fortuna to join the Skulls as the singer. They practiced in a grimy basement in Hollywood: Marc Morbid on guitar; Billy Bones on vocals; Chas Gray on bass; and Mick on drums. That basement would come to be a landmark

of late '70s punk rock. The Masque premiered such bands as the Weirdos, the Germs, the Screamers, X, the Controllers, the Dickies, and the Flesh Eaters, just to name a few. The Masque made it to the terrible twos and self-destructed. The Skulls showed their loyalty along with other Masque bands and played both nights of the "Save the Masque" benefit. The Skulls were one of the first bands to venture into the abyss that was Orange County. They even had the balls to do a spoof on surfing, trying to break an unbreakable surfboard, at the time when there was a growing rivalry between the punks and surfers. After playing twice in O.C. and returning to the city unharmed, they had an unlucky



Sean: I just want punk to go down in history as a viable form of rock'n'roll.

attempt at recording for What? Records. The recordings the Skulls did were "lost." Mick was the first to leave the band and then others followed when it started to fall apart.

In 1993, the Skulls resurfaced with Marc, Bruce Moreland and KK Barrett. They recorded songs but had a crap-fest with getting the recording out. The masters of those recordings were also lost. Later, Billy, Marc and the Wall of Voodoo drum machine would do a set at an acoustic political gig. Sean Antillon lent his services when the drum machine went ape shit. Things went back and forth and back and forth from then on. Although the Skulls had more line ups than Menudo they never lost the essence that set them flying back into action. It's good to know that the energy and thrust that was there in '77 is still alive and that the punk rock gene is passed from generation to generation. It all just goes to show that punk rock in the L.A. area in the late '70s was bona fide in the way that it gave a lot of people memories and the listeners of later an earful of what life was like in that time.

Marc Morbid and Mick "Sten Gun" Wallace have since died. I'd like to remember that without them there wouldn't be as much history as there is and the Skulls wouldn't be alive for us to see today.

FACE ONE: THE SERIOUS SIDE

James "Hardslug" Harding — bass
Sean Antillon — drummer whose extraordinaire
Kevin "The Kidd" Preston — teen sensation, guitar
Billy Bones — front man, nut case

Petite: [to The Kidd] You wear shades at night!

Kidd: The sun never sets when you're cool.

All: Ohh, watch out!

Sean: Sunglasses after dark?

James: Did you get that off the internet?

Kidd: I don't know where I got that from.

James: It was a joke, you know?

Kidd: Oh, fuck you!

Petite: How significant do you think the past is to what you're doing now? This is for all of you even though you weren't all there in the late '70s.

James: Well, for me the only significance really is that the type of music that was generated in the past was an age when music really mattered, you know? Because that was the channel to get your angst out and all that. It just happened to be this style of music. Just as my dad still listens to Johnny Cash and Marty Robins, I continue to listen to the style of music from when I was a teenager. The significance isn't necessarily the message so much as the energy of the style of music that people coin as punk rock. You can call it whatever you like but that style is what's important to me and that's what I've been able to play with these guys.

Sean: If you're asking what's it like being in The Skulls now as opposed to then, then it just seemed like an idea that got across its point and did what it needed to do. Now, the name from the past helps us because there's people that are interested, have heard the old songs, and come to see us now just to see if we'll do those songs. But it's a different entity now. It's really cool. It's got the same feel. We're turning out the same music, I hope. It feels like it to me although we're all influenced by different things and different generations of punk. I hope it brings some of that originality from the beginning.

Bones: I can see this band at the Masque. When we do shows a lot of times, I flash

back to the days of the Masque and I could see us four just fitting right in. I'll stand back and just go, "Wow."

Petite: This is for James and Billy. Do you find that you have had to deal with any ghosts? Was it hard or cathartic?

James: Are you talking about groupies?

Bones: As far as for me, ghosts, you mean like from my past? The only ghosts I deal with are Marc and Mick (Sten Gunn) and I talk to them all the time. We do "I Walk the Line" and I introduce it as it being Marc's song. He wrote it. I feel his presence there. The same with Mick when we do "Building Models." Mick wrote "Building Models" when he was the singer of the Skulls before I joined the band. He was the first guy I met when I came to California. Two years later he came up to me and asked me if I wanted to sing in a band. We had always talked about starting a band and he already had it going. That's it for me, I think about them all the time. Mick was the best man at my wedding and Marc was my best friend and it's hard because they're both gone.

James: That's kind of a difficult question for me because in relation to the band, I wasn't here. I was in England. I did a few years with the Adicts in the eighties and I got to experience the excitement of touring and playing shows. It's kinda weird for me now 'cause I'm getting on a bit and I did all that when I was in my early twenties and the ghost part of it for me was there was a few things I wasn't keen on with the whole music scene.

Bones: I'm confused. I think what she's asking is what skeletons do you have in your closet?

Petite: Well, yeah. Sometimes I'll listen to a band that I listened to when I was fourteen and it'll bring back certain good or bad feelings.

James: Oh, okay I got you. I was going to go off to the audience problem. That's the thing that scares the shit out of me; that somewhere from left field we'll get a whole bunch of idiots that latch on to us, people with questionable politics. That was a big problem for me. With the Adicts, rotten people would adhere to the band and we were like, "Oh no. This is terrible," and it scared the shit out of me. The kind of music we're playing — what it does for me is remind me of that youthful exuberance. I don't wanna sound corny but it makes your nuts tingle. The skeletons in my closet have a big fucking smile on their face, just like our logo. That logo sums it up for me.

Sean: Sometimes I feel — especially when we first started, and I heard Kevin — I wasn't even looking at Kevin, 'cause I tend to be off in my own world — I thought we were playing with Marc. I could feel him sometimes. Because Billy, Marc and I did the Skulls in '93 and I did get a chance to know and play with Marc. It seemed like it was Marc then I'd look over and Kevin would be grinning at me. That seems to be an ever-present ghost.

James: Well, all that and the fact that we were all gay at one point.

Sean: We're not gonna bring that up.

Petite: Now that you're older...

Bones: Ew! Older is not a good thing with us.

Petite: Mature? Now that you're wiser? You fucked me up. Now I don't know how I should word that. Hey, I'm older now — older than I was.

Bones: Yeah, I don't look at it that way. I'll always be a kid at heart, that's why when I'm on stage I'm having a blast. I never think about age. I think if you do think about age, you're gonna die young.

Sean: What was the question, though?

Petite: Oh, yeah. Is the way that you see music and how it corresponds to life different than it was when you were younger?

Bones: Oh, oh! I'll answer that one.

Sean: Oh, teacher, pick me!

James: No, me, me, me!

Bones: Ha, ha. As for me, I like true to life stuff. I'm always trying to put out a message. If you listen to "Victims," it was about serial killers, particularly the Hillside Strangler. I'm always looking for something real 'cause I hate what's going on in society. I always have. It was fucked up then and it's fucked up now.

Sean: It's always been a feel and an attitude thing for me. If I hear a good song — it doesn't necessarily have to be punk but it just makes me go "wow!" and the hair on the back of my head stands up — the feeling's still the same. I could hear a song from when I was a kid and spin the record today and go, "Man, this band is great."

Bones: And I've always — oh I'm sorry Sean, go ahead.

Sean: No, it's cool.

Bones: No, no. I know better than to interrupt you.

Sean: I hope I interpret songs the same way because it keeps me young mentally and emotionally.

Bones: Now I forgot what I was gonna say. Go ahead, Kidd.

Kidd: When I was younger, I was listening to Another Bad Creation. So, I don't even think you can find those tapes anymore.

Sean: Who's that?

Kidd: Like an old rap group. They were like six years old.

Petite: You know, Bel Biv DeVoe? Richie and I know what you're talking about.

James: I have a problem with words. You can play me a record I haven't heard for twenty years and the first time around I'll know where every note's gonna go, every chord change, and every beat. But if you ask me to sing the fucking words, I would-

n't know what the hell's going on. We've been playing these songs in the Skulls for two years and we decided to start swapping the verses on "Building Models." Billy sticks the mic in my mouth and I just didn't know the words. Some people latch on to words but for me it's the chords and beats. The lyrics don't really figure into the emotion part for me.

Bones: Mind you, I'm not real easy to understand when I'm singing anyway. In fact, half the time when I forget the lyrics

about: the energy. People will come up to us and say "great show" and we'll say "yeah" 'cause we had a blast.

James: And maybe there's a simple reason for that. That is that we're all lucky enough to be musicians. Sometimes singers in a band aren't musicians, they're vocalists, but they don't know how to play an instrument. We all know how to play at least one if not more instruments, therefore, as a musician, one would expect that musician to be able to focus in on the musical aspect of stuff.

We can use the energy and feeling instead of using the lyrics as a foundation.

Petite: Why do you think you've been able to reform without seeming stale or pathetic? Or does it feel like it's a completely different band?

Bones: Well, it definitely is a completely new band. We had something to start with and we had a feel of music that we liked from that period and we've been able to play that without trying incredibly hard. We didn't start out and say, "Oh, we gotta sound '77." It wasn't that at all. It was the energy and the camaraderie that we have and it just clicked.

James: It's important to add that we're playing new material. The new album that's coming out contains the old stuff that was our push off to this new band. We've already got six new songs written for the next album. This album that's coming out, *Therapy for the Shy*, if you review the musicianship, the collective product and how the songs are executed you'll see that today those old songs are almost completely different songs.

Bones: You know what's funny, too, is that we rise to the occasion. When we have an audience, we step it up.

Kidd: I think it has a lot to do with us being sober. I don't think back then it was the same way.

Bones: It's kinda cool that they don't drink. You know? We get drink tickets and I get them all.

Sean: I grew up in a real shitty part of L.A. and I was drinking and on drugs at a young age and hanging around with gangs. I stopped ten years ago. I think part of the reason this band is able to continue the name today is 'cause, number one, it's a cool name. I couldn't ask for a better band name. The lineup has changed and when you get new members into any band and you're able to let your new member bring their musicianship and spirit to the band, it



Bones: When we do shows a lot of times, I flash back to the days of the Masque.

'cause I've had a couple drinks or whatever I just kind of bark out a bunch of noise that goes with the flow of the song. And it's funny to watch people sing along and see that they know the lyrics better than I do. I've always appreciated music as a whole but I notice a lot of musicians pick at other musicians. I think it's important to just appreciate and enjoy it as a whole. If it moves me, I like it.

Petite: So what you're saying is that, for you, the thing that's really important is not so much the words but the energy?

Bones: Yeah and that's what we're all



Kidd: When I was younger, I was listening to Another Bad Creation.

changes a little bit. Then you write a new song and you play an old song, it becomes a new thing. That has a lot to do with continuing the Skulls from then to now.

Petite: What's been the most difficult thing about starting the band again? Was there anything you were worried about or did you not give a shit?

Bones: There you go. There were no concerns. We like what we're doing and if people like it, it makes it more worthwhile. We didn't go out and do this to get a record deal or to even have people like us. We got together and we liked what we did and we said, "Let's do it." We like playing music and we like playing together. These guys are like my brothers.

Kidd: It wasn't even really supposed to be a band again. It was only supposed to be for three shows.

Sean: When we decided to do this — see, I've been involved in so many bands and projects and I've gotten to know musicians. I invested a little time and after two weeks of playing with these guys, I could tell we had something good. Any concern that I might have had was gone. I thought these were good guys to be in a band with. Everyone's really open-minded and everyone can execute their position in the band well; well enough to where we don't have to add a rhythm guitar player and no one has to compensate for anyone. So I figured that out and knew there was nothing to worry about. I said, "Let's write a new tune and see how it goes from there."

James: My mom taught me something that was very important. She was an artist, a painter back in England. She used to put her

paintings up in pubs and stuff to sell and some of them wouldn't sell. Then she started painting pictures of all these fluffy cats and they fucking flew off the walls. She was making quite a bit of money off them. Then one day she stopped and went back to painting oak trees or whatever it was she wanted. I asked her why she didn't just do some of those cats. She sold a lot of those. She told me, "You know what? I don't care if I sell them. You should create something because you wanna create it and it brings you enjoyment. If someone else can get enjoyment out of it, then that's great. Just don't compromise what you do for the sake of someone else." I never forgot that because it applies perfectly to music. We did this for our own outlet. It was something fun for us then it boomed into what it is now. We're writing tunes we like and if we don't all like them we don't play them.

Bones: Yeah, we've shot some songs.

James: Yeah, we've even set fire to some.

Petite: This one's for the Kidd. Yeah, you. Are you done chewing your banana? Has your view of the scene changed since you've been playing with the Skulls?

Kidd: Well, I think I got into the Skulls at a really good time for music. A lot of old bands got back together. It seemed right when I joined the Skulls. When we started playing again, I was glad to be part of a scene that was and still is great, instead of being in some band that never even gets to put out a record. It's cool to hang out with people who are older than me and it's cool going to shows and seeing the old guy bands and still hanging out with people my age. I think people have gotten a lot more

respectful 'cause it's not just a youthful thing anymore. I mean, it is, but physically some of these guys aren't that young.

Bones: This kid knew more about what happened in '77 than I did. I was blown away when I first met him. When he wanted me to play with him I thought, "God, I'm old enough to be your father." He kept persisting that we do something and it was the best decision I've ever made. I hadn't seen Sean in years and we were at this Controllers gig at the Big Toe Lodge or whatever the hell it's called.

Sean: Bigfoot Lodge. The Controllers and The Dogs.

Bones: I took the Kidd with me and Mad Dog Carla snuck him in. Brendan (Mullen, the proprietor of the Masque) happened to be spinning "Victims," the one that was done with Sean, Marc, and myself. The Kidd says to me, "That was a tight rhythm section." And

just as he said that, Sean walked in. Just like that. Then Kidd says, "Hey, let's do a song!" I asked Sean if he felt like doing a song and he said, "Fuck yeah." We did one song and I'm not gonna say that we turned the place upside down but the level of intensity went up.

James: I wasn't even part of the picture yet. Billy and I were doing something totally aside from that. He called me up 'cause, unfortunately, Keith Miller, who's an awesome bassist, had to pull out and Billy asked me if I knew anyone that could play bass. I said no but that I'd get one and see him in a week. I just went and bought one and learned it and that was that.

Bones: Yeah 'cause after that Bigfoot thing some people asked us to play a couple reunion shows. Well, "I guess," I said. "Reunion?" There was no one to reunite with. We said yeah and we got Slug when Keith dropped out.

Sean: Yeah, but the scene's different for him now — to finish answering his question.

James: Yeah. He even went and threw some bananas away while we were answering the question for him.

Petite: From each of you I'd like to know what you think of music nowadays.

Kidd: It's all rock'n'roll to me.

James: I'm not gonna sit here and rag on any particular bands. Let's say there's a band that people think are really cheesy and "sold out." How are we to know the members of that band aren't getting the same feeling from playing that we are?

Bones: Punk rock is here to stay and it ain't ever gonna go anywhere.

There'll always be another young kid that likes what it does to him and is gonna run with it.

Sean: There's so many little types of punk rock. There's pop punk, hardcore, '77, the list goes on. I had a friend that went to school/prison in the early '90s. When he came out, he said to me, "Hey man. What is this? They're playing punk rock on the radio." I didn't know what to say because I hadn't even noticed. So it's not so localized now. There's bands that people would tend to call punk rock that back in the day wouldn't be called that. Like The Real Kids. I would call them rock'n'roll but I still keep them between my Rotters record and what ever comes next in the "R" section in my collection. So, to me, it *is* all rock'n'roll. The state of punk rock to me, it's cool. I mean I go to 7-11 and there's kids in high school dressing the way I did but they're listening to Marilyn Manson. And I don't think they're calling that punk rock, but to most parents they just lump it together. I'm cool with it being bigger than it was.

James: I went to the Inland Invasion and I think that pretty much summed it up. There you are, you've got 40,000 people from age eight to fifty-eight and they're all there subscribing to the thing. It just goes back to the feeling and the energy you get from the music. Personally, I thought some of those bands were shit but they were only shit to me. It was a perfect example of how you could have all these "punk rock" bands under one roof and still have so many different tastes in one genre.

Sean: When I was growing up, walking around high school, and being punk rock I'd hear people going, "Hey, look, there's that guy." I would tell people that they'd like these bands one day. "Social Distortion, one day you'll like them," I'd tell them. I think I secretly wanted it to be bigger and accepted. I am a bit of a purist and I do have a very scaled down record collection. I just want it to go down in history as a viable form of rock'n'roll.

Petite: You don't see it weird? I find it disturbing that some of these kids who are into it aren't getting the feeling and energy that's intended.

Bones: Those bands that put out bad messages and rouse kids to destroy stuff are stupid and it shouldn't be that way. It's an attitude. It's revved up.

James: That's the problem with people. They associate punk rock with aggression and violence and that's only part of it — the negative part of it. If you're lucky enough to be on a stage performing, doing something you enjoy, you have a responsibility. If those kids are liking you, they're respecting you. The least you can do is offer the same respect back. If you've got that power to shake them up then you need to show them how to focus that energy on more positive things. These kids that just end up cracking each other over the head and knifing

each other need a fucking wake up call. I've got kids of my own now and I don't wanna be talking about knifing and fucking people up, busting caps in their ass and all this bullshit — without being corny but still putting out some positive messages. And a lot of kids today, through the fault of the government and the piss poor education of the past two decades, really need guidance. Some of them know they need it and are almost begging for it and others don't know. If we can get twenty people over the course of our lives to change for the better, even if it's just to be turned on to music, then that's a cool thing. It's better than getting a kid to set fire to a building.

Bones: Well, you know a lot of our lyrics are dark and have angst to them. But, again, we lay it all out on the stage. We go out there and hang out with the kids and talk to them so they get to know us. I think that's very important. There's a lot of bands that shun their responsibility, but you're dealing with young minds and you have to have a certain level of responsibility.

James: A lot of those bands that put out bad messages, they're the first to get the fuck off that stage. Everyone's out there and the band's gone and there's no connection. They go out there and shit on their minds then take off.

Petite: Not before they scoop up all the little fourteen-year-old girls, though. What do you think, Kidd?

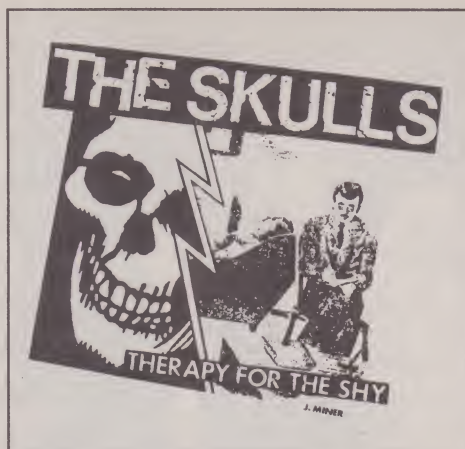
Kidd: You can go back and forth in so many ways. I agree but people are gonna get off the way they get off. They just let the listeners interpret it the way they want. You can't always hold the artist responsible. It's really tough. We're not to say that the other bands aren't doing it in jest and just 'cause they wanna fuck off after the show and drink that's just their thing. Our thing is staying and talking to the people and the other bands. And some people just can't face their own audience. We sing "Kill Me Kill Me Kill," which is about a guy who wants to do himself in, but it's in jest and hopefully people see how stupid the idea of committing suicide is.

Sean: It's a personal stand. I get different messages from different music and different songs. Then years later I'll spin a record I've played a million times and it'll hit me a totally different way. Then I try to remember how it made me feel before.

Bones: You know what really pisses me off? The people that are just there just assholes and go as far as to fuck with little girls who just wanna stand up front and have fun. These jerks will grab them by the hair and drag them into the pit and slug 'em. And that's just fucked up. Let me tell you, back in the day when this first started there was a lot of times when I whacked people in the head with the fucking mic stand. Nothing would stop me from doing that to someone who was being an asshole but it's a little different now. I have a daughter. I'm a little more responsible.

James: I challenge anybody, anybody in Southern California to present me with a penis that is smaller than mine...





FACE TWO: THE ASS-JOKES-SIDE

And we knew there was a fucked up side of the Skulls, so Dale and I went back and talked to them about it. —Todd

Todd: Billy, it's been said several times that The Masque, the physical location of the old punk rock venue in Hollywood, had a vibe to it. Some even compare it to a burial ground, even to current day. Can you testify to that?

Bones: I'm always looking for something real 'cause I hate what's going on in society. I always have. It was fucked up then and it's fucked up now.

James: Testicle?

Bones: It definitely had a vibe to it. The Masque was a cool place to be. It was a good group of about five hundred plus people and it was a nice place to hang out, a nice place to get fucked up and a nice place to be yourself without anyone saying a fuckin' thing to you. Cutting loose.

James: Well, Sean, he has a mask and he adds a vibrator to it sometimes. It's a yogurt mask. There's a vibe with that mask, isn't there, kinda?

Sean: Yeah. I'll also grow a caterpillar for that week for a little extra vibe.

Kidd: When we play now — I'm gonna get hippie — but I can feel a soul and it gets really bright. Just knowing that this music's been played for twenty years, it feels right that it can still happen.

Todd: So, to clarify, James, you were a mime? Is that correct?

James: That's right. I was a mime, but unfortunately, I lost my voice so I had to look for something else to do.

Todd: Like put a keyboard in front of you?

James: I did that, badly, for a few years and then I discovered that if you strap four pieces of thin metal to a log, it makes a kind of deep, twangy sound and we decided that

might be a good fit to match up with the drums and the guitar in the Skulls.

Sean: That's an invention of ours.

Bones: Doesn't losing your voice make for good miming? I thought that's the whole point.

James: That's why I quit. I was an Irish mime. [laughs]

Todd: Sean, a technical question. Dale, who you know is a drummer also, says that you have a special drumming technique.

Sean: Huh?

James: It's called staying awake.

Todd: The Dolphin Pussy Slap. What's that?

Sean: Good man. You take a girthy woman and you shave her pussy and you grease it all up. Get her laying like the whole chickens that you see in the frozen meat section at the supermarket — and it does look like a chicken. [Makes a hand slapping motion.] Pow, and it kind of makes a sound like [puts finger in mouth, closes his lips, and makes a popping sound when the finger's pulled out]. Overhand or underhand works fine. I do prefer the underhanded version, and that's playing a drum, boy, let me tell you. Watch out.

James: Are we talking about vaginas?

Kidd: Want to hear the best terminology for vagina I've heard today? Va-J.J.

Sean: Here's a good one...

James: Snatch box.

Sean: No, no, gayshesh or gishash.

James: John Wayne's saddle bags.

Sean: The purple jaws of Grimace. That's when you get a darker female. Purple, like boiled meat.

James: I've heard it referred to before as a car crash.

Kidd: I don't know about that.

Todd: Billy, was sex better in the '70s? They just read like a more carefree sex time.

Bones: Sex is really good right now, actually. I guess it gets better with age.

Sean: Billy Bones is a pig like me and James, ooh, and the Kidd.

Todd: Define pigness.

James: He makes women defecate in the dressing room while he sits under a glass table.

Sean: We all love larger women. I'm a "V man" myself.

Todd: Vagina?

Sean: *Voluptuous Magazine*. Giving props.

Kidd: 36" 28" 36"

Sean: No, no, no.

Kidd: Those are the measurements.

James: Of what, your penis?

Sean: Give me a 38" waist. I'm in heaven. [makes mmmmm sound.]

James: I just like huge ass cheeks. You can peel them apart, look at the fucking chocolate starfish, and have a little bit of chimney stack action.

Sean: Me and James once greased up with Crisco some butt cheeks... that was fun.

James: Munched away at that dirt box. Cake.

Todd: An open-ended question. When was the last time you kicked someone in the band in the nuts?

James: That was just three weeks ago.

Kidd: Our merch guy, Jon, he was pulling Bones's leg. He had a sling on his arm and I kept punching him in the arm and Bones fuckin' pulls back and kicks me right in the ass, dude.

James: You kind of liked it, huh?

Kidd: Yeah, actually I enjoyed that one.

James: You have a deep ass.

Sean: It was a three hour joke. So, they're driving in the car, out to the show, and the Kidd's just slugging John in his arm, right? And he's going, "Oww." And Bones is going, "Hey man, relax. Calm down." Finally, Bones had enough.

Bones: Jon told me he'd fallen off the roof, trying to pirate cable.

James: Which is believable because that's exactly the fucking kind of thing he'd do...

Oh, and about a month ago in Pasadena or wherever the fuck we were, Billy Bones kicks me in the fucking nuts on stage.

Sean: He donkey kicked James right in the nuts.

James: I kept playing. I missed like two notes and the fucking backing vocals went up an octave.

Bones: That was a good score, man.

Kidd: It's a hard target to hit, too.

Sean: You've got me, the aircraft carrier. You can't miss my ass. No one fucks with it. One day, I'll get lucky.

Todd: Last question. What is your day job and how does it help your band?

James: My day job is sales and marketing.

Todd: For what?

James: Basically, anything and everything.

Todd: Band included?

James: Band included.

Sean: I blow up the balloon knot for special movies. Nah, I'm a half-assed carpenter.

Kidd: I really do blow up balloons. I work at a party supply store. We jacked Bones's glasses and I got him some skeleton hands. We dress up. That helps.

Bones: I flog vibrating equipment. Any kind of tool you can think of and that's what I do. That's my thing. Jackhammers is my specialty. First aid kits, too.

James: I'd like to issue a challenge. I challenge anybody, anybody in Southern California to present me with a penis that is smaller than mine and if they do, I will personally buy them a t-shirt or any Skulls merchandise of their choosing. I'm not kidding.





TAKING BACK THE ALLEY

Three parts Ramones, one part Devo, marinate in whatever alcohol's handy, pop them on stage, garnish with monster masks and you've got the furious three-chord assault with a keyboard that is the Spits. Call it stripped down, bare-bones or precisely engineered, the songs rocket forward on the strength of the bass, drums and, believe it or not, the keyboards, which are no kitschy throwback to the paranoid '80s but an integral part of the rhythm. You won't find frilly trills here. The keyboard robot (featured on the cover of their first full-length) plays with all the grace and urgency of a finger bang while the guitar explores landscapes of sadness and regret through a lens smeared with blood, booze and bile. (Just ask those who wander too close to the stage.) Deemed Seattle's most dysfunctional band, it's a miracle they ever leave the Pacific Northwest at all, but when they do it's a show you don't wanna miss. This interview took place in an alley off Santa Monica Boulevard behind the Garage and it felt so right.

Aaron plays bass guitar, Joe is the keyboard robot, Sean plays guitar, and Wayne, who was asleep in the van during the interview, thumps drums.

S: Are the rumors that you guys have been having parties in the Briefs' mansion every night while they're on tour true?

Sean: That is very true.

Aaron: Yeah, we party there. We do coke off their dog's ass.

S: When I interviewed the Briefs not too long ago, Chris Brief said that you guys were a bunch of drunk losers who live in their cars.

Sean: Gee, everything's a little easier when you have

money.

Aaron: That is true. That is very true.

Sean: We're not losers, we're just drunks.

Joe: At least we have a car.

Sean: Yeah.

S: Does Chris drive?

Sean: God, no. He rides a little moped. He's a scooter boy.

Joe (sing-song): Scoo-ter boy...

Sean: He runs a scooter gang in Seattle. He's on a major label and runs a scooter gang. You wanna talk about a loser...

S: He did some drumming for you briefly?

Aaron: Briefly, very good.

Sean: Yeah, he's an honorary Spit. He's filled in on certain occasions when we didn't have a drummer.

S (with tongue planted firmly in cheek): He seemed very bitter about the experience.

Sean: You're kidding.

S: Actually, I think he referred to you as a wanna-be King Diamond.

Aaron: Oh my God.

Sean: Wow. I guess he could be a little bitter.

S: Why's that?

Sean: I think it's because he couldn't play our songs.

Joe: Too complicated.

Sean: They were too complicated for him, but we love him.

Aaron: You know those shoe boys.

Sean: We're not singing about new shoes.

Joe: Or sunglasses and pink ties.

S: Settle this dispute for me. Who gets less pussy — the drummer or the keyboard player?

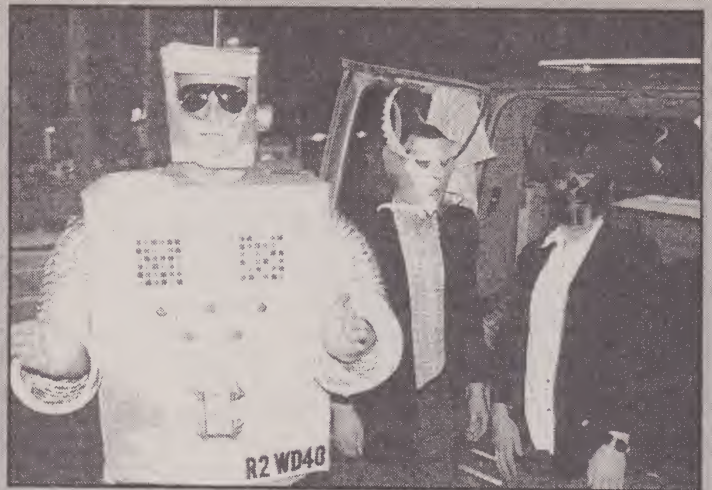
Sean: Hmmmmmm. The robot.

Aaron: We're on #10 as far as keyboard players go so you have to be specific. Our last keyboard player? That would have to be the drummer.

Sean and Joe: Yeah.

Aaron: Definitely.

S: Joe, what do you have to say



INTERVIEW BY MONEY

about that?

Sean: Robots like sex. They get it all the time.

Joe: That's right, I'm a fucking machine.

Sean: Exactly.

S: You and Charlie Sheen. While we're on the subject of robots, if you could replace anyone in your life with a robot, who would you replace and what would be the robot's distinguishing characteristics?

Sean: My ex-girlfriend. If I could turn her into a robot so I could reprogram her to say stupid shit when I wanted to hear it instead of when I didn't want to hear it.

Joe: I'd like to replace myself so it could go out and do all the shit work while I sit at home and eat pork rinds and drink cheap beer all day. It could bring home the bacon for me.

Aaron: I'm perfectly fine with all of my organic counterparts. I have no problems with the living.

S: Okay, complete this sentence for me: It's okay for a man to wear makeup if _____.

Sean: If his dick is on straight.

Joe: Or he's post op.

Sean: It's okay to wear make-up if you're Lance Mercer (a Seattle photographer).

S: The song "Bring," on the new album, what is that about?

Aaron: Killing prostitutes.

S: Killing prostitutes?

Aaron: Yeah. Just for the hell of it.

S: Did you have a particular prostitute killer in mind?

Aaron: No.

Sean: He has fantasies about killing prostitutes.

S: Why?

Aaron: They're dirty.

(Benefits of Conducting Interviews in an Alley #1: You catch interesting ambient sounds — like police sirens — on tape, which in this instance is more ironic than annoy-

ing.)

Sean: I think what brings it on is the cost of prostitutes these days.

Joe: Times are hard. They need to go down.

Aaron: I did see a \$50 half-hour special in Vegas, which seemed fair.

Joe: Two for \$69.

S: Every time the interest rates go down, the cost of hookers shoots up.

Sean: Exactly.

Joe: People get hornier during a recession.

S: You have two full-lengths, right?

Sean: Yes, two full-lengths.

S: And they're both self-titled.

Sean: Yes.

S: What gives?

Sean: Aaron, do you want to explain that one?

Aaron: We're going to have a total of three full-lengths by the end of next year.

S: The first two are self-titled...

Aaron: And the third one is going to be self-titled as well.

S: Why is that?

Aaron (sounding surprised by the question, as if he was a scientist and I was a journalist who had asked him why his experiment had gone so horribly awry): I don't know.

S: Will it be on a different label?

Aaron: It probably will be.

Sean: It's like a new issue of a magazine.

Aaron: Right. It's going to equal a full-length when it's done. Each one is nine songs—

Sean: And seventeen minutes.

Aaron: And combined, it will equal a full-length. When you're dysfunctional and lazy, it's hard to do sixteen songs. It took us eight years to put out a fucking 7" record.

S: How many records have you put out?

Aaron: We have two full-lengths, two 7" records, a split, and a song on a Wendy O comp on Johnny Cat

records.

Sean: It's a really good song.

S: Let's move to the true confessions portion of the interview.

Aaron: Okay.

Joe: Uh-oh.

S: Have you ever used the phrases "Keep it real," "Get jiggy with it," or "Funky cold medina" in a non-ironic fashion?

Aaron: I remember saying, "Keep it real" when I was like fourteen.

Sean: Yeah. I used to use "Funky cold medina" a lot because I thought I was.

Joe: I had funky cold edema, when my leg started to swell, but it just turned out to be something else.

S: Is that a side effect of syphilis?

Joe: No, it's like gout or something where my feet swell up from eating rich food, boozing too much. Now instead of my feet swelling, I just have swell feet.

S: Have you ever slept with a band mate's ex-girl (or boy) friend?

Aaron: Yeah. I slept with one of Sean's ex-girlfriends. Knowingly. She wasn't really a girlfriend, though. More like a fuck buddy. So I've dipped the familiar, yeah.

S: Does this revelation shock or surprise you?

Sean: No. That's why I call him a big dick.

S: This is a two-part question. Have you ever defended the merits of an emo band, and if so, which band, and what merits?

Aaron: The Briefs.

Sean: Yeah. I would have to say the same.

Joe: Ditto.

Sean: They're cool guys and all—

Aaron: We love them to death, they're great friends—

Sean: But fuck. Come on, guys. You're a little old to be doing the whole cry on your—

Joe: Skinny tie.

Sean: Cry on your skinny tie!

S: Those skinny tie blues.

Joe: Boo-oo-oo-oo-hoo. (Riffing off of the lyric "Uh-uh-uh-uh-oh" from the Briefs song "Run the Other Way")

Sean: We have to stop. Those guys won't think this is funny. They'll read this and get pissed. We're sorry. We're sorry, Briefs.

Julia Smut: Hello.

{Benefits of Conducting Interviews in an Alley #2: Your friends can drive up, say hello and then drive off again.}

S: Who is the worst skater in the Spits?

Aaron: That would be Joe.

Joe: That would have to be me.

Sean: Robots can't skate.

Joe: I weigh five tons. It's kinda hard to stay on a board. I keep breaking them.

S: You can't skate with swollen feet.

Joe: It's all titanium.

Sean: The best grip tape in the world won't hold titanium feet.

S: Who is the best skater?

Sean: That would be me, Sean Spit, guitar. I skate—

Aaron: And destroy.

Joe: And he likes horses.

S: How often do you use costumes during your performances?

Sean: Every time.

S: A different look every time?

Sean: We try to.

Aaron: It's hard on tour.

Sean: We try to never use the same costume twice, but we often fail.

S: Do you have an organizing principle behind the costume selection?

Sean: Yeah. Last minute. It kinda sucks. It's very stressful.

S: The first and last time I saw you, it was at the 3 Clubs with the Briefs—

Sean: We shaved our heads that day.

S: You had mohawks, fake mustaches, cop shades and sleeveless denim vests with no shirts on.

Sean: Our colors.

S: It was like a weird gay cop thing.

Aaron: Yeah.

Sean: It may be a gay cop thing on the West Coast, but in the Midwest that's called rip your fucking ass, motherfucker. That's called kicking ass. That's called don't fuck with me. That's what that is.

Joe: Is GG Allin a gay cop?

S: He's pushing up sad little dysfunctional daisies.

Sean: Yes, he is.

S: What's been the most outlandish Spits extravaganza?

Sean: We slaughtered a deer in Detroit. Where was that?

Joe: Cadillac.

Sean: I thought it was Detroit, but it was Cadillac, Michigan. We slaughtered a deer on stage because it was hunting season. We played an all ages show.

Aaron: We hung it up. We had a guy carving it up onstage while we played. Carving it, wrapping it up.

Sean: Dressed like cops. Not gay cops, but cops.

Aaron: Yep.

Sean: And then the show got shut down because some crazy kid came up and shot the dead deer while it was hanging there. And they shut us down. I'm not shitting you.

{Obligatory authorial intrusion: I'm pretty sure he was.}

Sean: That was probably the most outlandish show, even though it doesn't really have anything to do with our costumes, although it kinda does because it was part of our skit.

Aaron: It was. It was definitely part of the performance. And it was appreciated.

Sean: They loved it.

Aaron: And the meat went to good use.

S: Kept the village fed for a week. So what do you have planned for tonight's performance?

Aaron: No plans.

Sean: We got some new stuff actually that we're going to bust out tonight.

Aaron: Right.

Sean: We picked up some new costumes in—where was that?

Joe: Kalamazoo.

Sean: Kalamazoo, Michigan. We're going to test it out on the big Hollywood stage. And if the crowd ain't having it, we'll bring out the fucking dead deer.

S: Are there some stage shows that

are so outlandish they can only be done in the Pacific Northwest?

Sean: That's a good question. You mean like a testing ground, because someone else might find it offensive?

Aaron: We were 24-7 Spits once and people mistook that for going Al Jolson style.

S: I don't get it.

Aaron: 24-7 Spies!

S: I forgot all about them.

Joe: So did the audience, apparently.

Aaron: They really didn't appreciate it. We had dreadlocks. We wore shorts—

Sean: We wore shoe polish on our faces.

S: Oh.

Aaron: I think it really would have gone over well somewhere like—

S: Atlanta.

Joe: Berkeley.

Aaron: Right, at the Gillman. I'm sure they really would have appreciated it. But we really didn't think about that. It was all innocent fun.

S: Last question: You're in the Iraqi desert, storming Saddam's winter palace, who would you rather have by your side: a gay Nazi or a Christian cop?

Sean: I'd say Dan Brief. That gay Nazi named Dan Brief.

S: That's who you'd want?

Sean: Yeah. He's a good guy. A hell of a guy. His hand is a little on the limp side, but he's always there, he's got my back.

S: Is he good with small arms?

Sean: I don't know. I'm thinking a gay Nazi could whip some ass, whereas a Christian cop... I don't know.

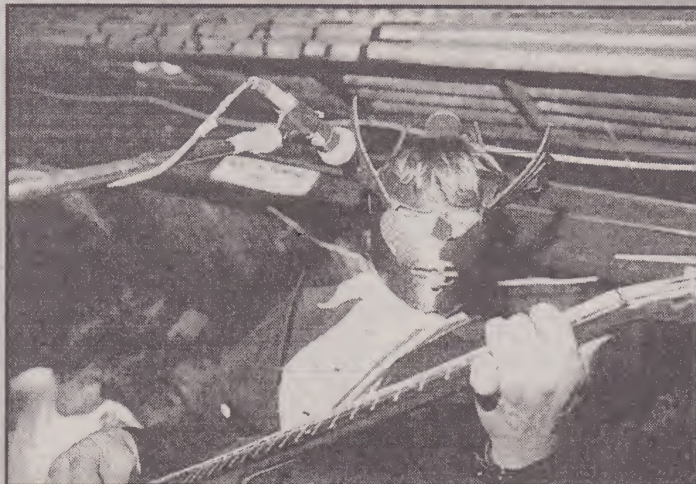
S: This is more of a who would you want in your foxhole question.

Joe: There are no atheists in foxholes.

Sean: Oh! Then I'd want a Christian cop.

Joe: A gay Christian cop dressed in Nazi regalia.

Aaron: I'd want the New York Dolls. They weren't punk. They were gay.



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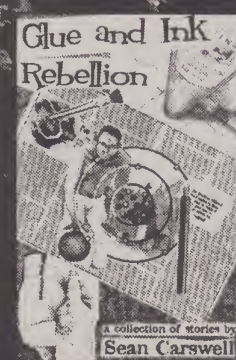
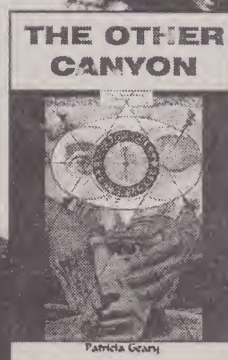
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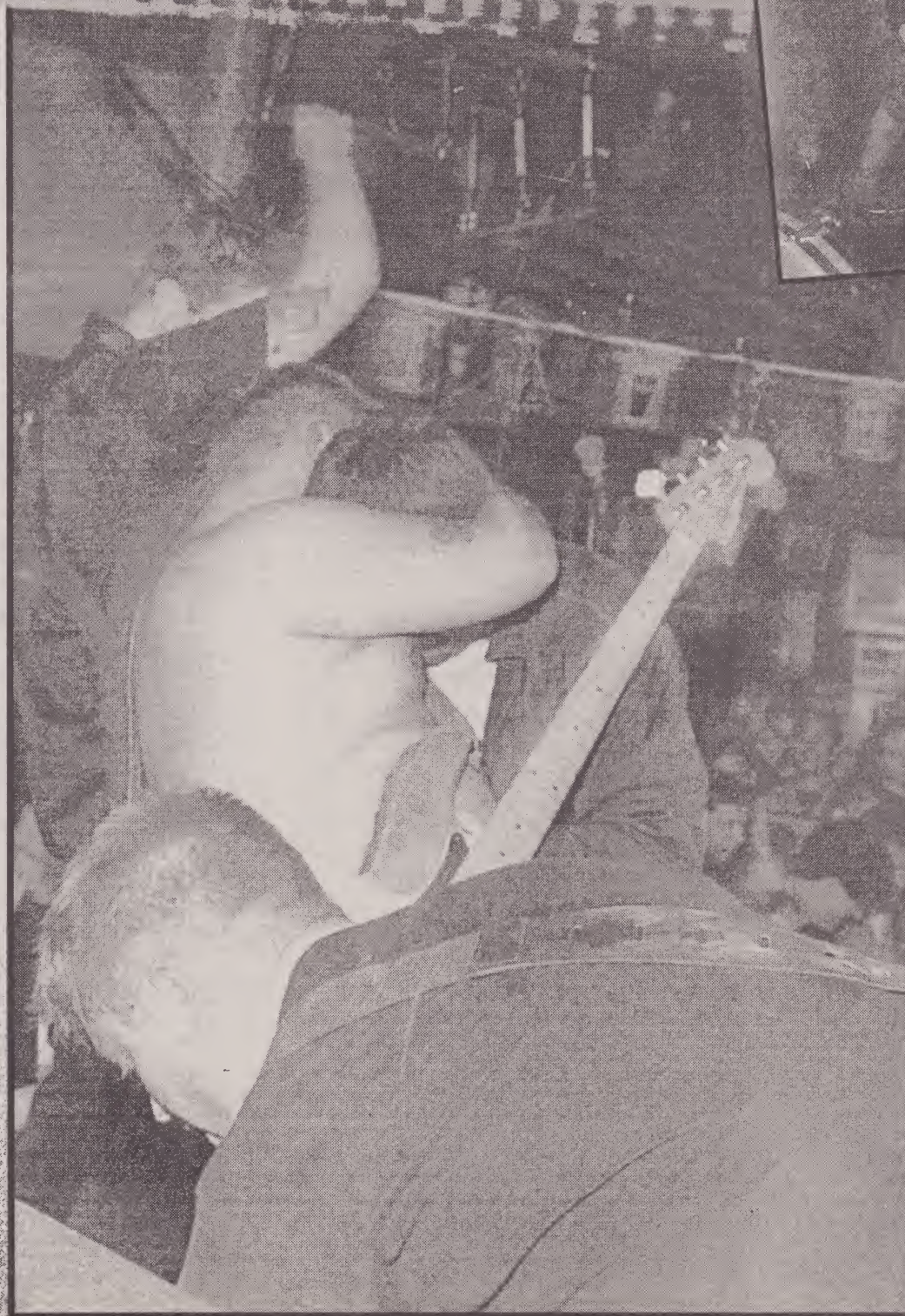
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RAZORCAKE 73

Please note: If you're an established record company, and you send us a pre-release without all the album art, we're probably going to throw that shit away... cock gobblers.

5+ DEPOSIT:

We Have Your Daughter!: CD

I picture how I would buy this album. I go to see a bigger band at a club and these guys are opening. Being the type of guy who likes to dance and have fun at shows, I maybe watch close for a few songs and get into it during the faster stuff. I buy the CD, only to remember that live music is almost always faster and crazier than its recorded counterpart. I listen to this once, then a second time just to make sure. It then lives on my shelf, which is to say I don't pull it out to listen to it, but I don't get rid of it either. Invariably, my cousin or the little sister of a girl I am dating starts getting into punk via TRL bands, and so I make her a tape of this to show that there are better bands than Sum 41, but I also don't want to scare the kid off at first. In terms of my actual listening experience with this, I put it on, nit picked the hell out of the first few songs because it is in league with, if not better than the sophomore pop punk I see too much of. I then get distracted and find myself enjoying it as background music. I don't know if that's a compliment because I enjoyed it or an insult because it was background music, but that's where I stand. To put it another way — pop punk that would stand out at the Warped tour and be held in regard at a frat kegger. —Rich Mackin (Radical)

6-MINUTE HEARTSTOP, THE: 321 Odds: CDEP

I'm sooo emotional, I want to be just like Fugazi and At the Drive-In. —Donofthedeath (Rise)

ABILENE: Two Guns, Twin Arrows: CD

What can I say about emo and art rock that hasn't already been said? It's as interesting as a 5000 level accounting course and as tasty as furniture polish. Hasn't this all gone on long enough? Haven't we given it a fair chance? Can't we take their amplifiers away from them now? Please? —Aphid Peewit (Polk)

ABSENTEES, THE: Illegal Listening Device: 1979-2000: CD

These guys were originally known as The Absentee Concept back in their official 1978 beginnings, and soon changed to The Absentees after a line-up change. What Artifix Records has done here with this disc is gather up every imaginable recording (and then some) from these Long Beach, Californians and chronologically slap 'em onto one convenient CD. Most of you southlanders probably remember their first single, "Tryin' to Mess With Me," on that limited edition of the *Killed By Death* full-length back from 1993. I believe. A very well put together comp of one of the more obscure So. Cal bands, featuring cuts from the early '80s on, as well as a live version of The Stooges



In fact, when they come to Clackamas they can play in the cafeteria here at City Hall. I think we're having meatloaf that day. —Cuss Baxter

"Cock in My Pocket" from 1979. Fans of early Damned, old L.A. punk rock and the like will find a spot for this in their CD collection. Here's to tracking down more bands who seemingly slipped through the cracks and are now getting their music to the masses. Good job, here, Greg. Keep 'em coming. —Designated Dale (Artfix)

ABSENTEES, THE: Secret Weapons: CD-R

One day, many eons from now, when a new, greater species has risen to take man's place as caretaker of the planet and war, disease, and pet rocks are no longer even a bad memory, a copy of this disc will be found buried under the rubble of a McDonald's sign. After much study, one of these greater beings will figure out how to make this disc work. He will play it and the truth will then be known as to why mankind destroyed itself: a species that could come up with music this bad was obviously too stupid to survive. —Jimmy Alvarado (No address)

ALL SYSTEMS GO!: Mon Chi Chi: CD

One of my favorite bands to emerge in the last five years is back with a new disc to tickle even your mom's pubic region in the most delightfully rockin' fashion. ASG's *Mon Chi Chi* features all-fingers/no wank guitarist Mark Arnold (ex-Big Drill Car) and singer-in-chief, John Kastner (ex-Doughboys). This time around, there are also two new members in tow — drummer Dean Bentley and bassist/singer Tom D'Arcy, who took Frank Daly's (also ex-Big Drill Car) spot after Frank gave the final middle finger to touring. I'd like to give credit to you, Tom — those are some pretty fuckin' big shoes to fill, and this record shows you're down for the cause. Gold cuts here are "Running Blind," "Fascination Unknown," "Sweet Revenge," "Record of Hate," and "Taking Up Space." I have to admit that this CD has grown on me more and more as I've been spinning it lately, and I'm fully backing *Mon Chi Chi*, but I'm giving the absolute you-buy-this-fucking-CD-or-I'm-kicking-your-stupid-ass endorsement to their self-titled full-length debut. This one's strongly recommended, but that first

release is essential ASG bliss. Bands like the Ramones, Motorhead, 'Mats, or Dramarama remind me a lot of ASG. Not so much the music, but how ASG is so "right under your fucking nose, dummy" good. —Designated Dale (<www.asgcentral.com>)

ALTAIRA: Self-titled: Demo

It's the little things that keep me so stoked about all this underground music we cover in *Razorcake*. Little things like getting an envelope from a stranger who saw the Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission show that *Razorcake* threw a couple of months ago and had a great time there. By way of thanks (and probably to get a review), he added his band's eight-song demo, and the demo was one of the best things I've come across in a couple of months. In a lot of ways, Altaira reminds me of Tiltwheel: gruff vocals, tight melodies but enough tempo changes to keep you on your toes, a healthy nod to Leatherface without becoming a knockoff band, and the music's strange ability to creep around your eardrums and get under your skin. This isn't to say that Altaira is just a Tiltwheel wannabe. They're not. But they're learning lessons from a great band. I could easily see this band picked up by a label like Attention Deficit Disorder (they have a lot in common also with ADD bands like The Timversion and Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission), and catapulted from there straight into obscurity. —Sean Carswell (Altaira, <altaira2002@hotmail.com>)

ANCHORSET: Self-titled: CD

This gives me the perfect opportunity to talk about something that's been getting to me with a lot of albums lately — and it's not exactly a negative review. You take a band that sounds pretty ripping and put them in a studio. Maybe they're blown away at how good they sound once the levels are tweaked a bit. Maybe they think the producer/mixer/master guy knows more about what they're doing. When it makes its way to me, I end up hearing something with promise at best, at worst just some generic shit that I won't give more than a quick listen. Anchorset falls into the first group for me. I can tell that there's something

there. I'm pretty sure they'd have me floored if I saw them live, but in the recording there's something missing, or maybe added. It just seems a bit too glossy. I've listened to it a bunch of times now and I like it. I like it a lot. I'm not saying that everything needs to be gritty and raw, or that the only way to record a band is live. Some studios just know how to capture that energy better than others. I just get bummed when I hear something that I could really like sounding more like the Offspring. The album is definitely growing quickly on me. And if they can hold the stage with the Marvels (one of Boston's best, if not fattest bands) they're more than okay by me. If you're in the Boston area, I highly suggest checking these guys out. —Megan Pants (Nice Guy)

ANTISEEN: Drastic: EP Royalty: CD

This is a reissue of two old EPs of theirs. Both EPs, each over fifteen years old, contain some of the better songs I've heard from them. Actually, this is the best stuff I've heard from Antiseen. It's got a raw rough sound to it. It can't compliment their brand of music any better. Badass southern style rock'n'roll with a low-fi sound that really brings out the punk in them. —Toby Tober (TKO)

ANTISEEN:

Honour Among Thieves: CD

This is a reissue of an album so badass that originally it couldn't be contained by just one label. Co-released by Bonafide and Chopper in '88, it was recorded between '84 and '86. This reissue has three bonus tracks that are right on par with the rest of the album. You get what you will with any Confederacy of Scum band: it's dirty, it's raw, and there's nothing pretty about it. No apologies and none needed. —Megan Pants (TKO)

ARTIMUS PYLE: Self-titled: 7"

I've been listening to more Black Sabbath lately, and for the first time in my life, I think it's finally seeping in. I skip the trippy songs. That makes the listening easier for me. While they aren't the fastest band in the world, Sabbath can sure make songs heavy. Artimus Pyle — although by way of crusty punk instead of acid rock — have developed a similar sensibility. When they slow down, they don't screech to a halt, they just dig in deeper and let the sickness settle. They have the uncanny ability to be both atmospheric and then thrust a knife to the listener's throat. I've also read a lot about World War I and there's something very trench warfare, mustard gas, bayonet, gangrene about how Artimus Pyle sound. It's dirty business. There's a lot of hand-to-hand combat. The songs are creepy and dark without being formulaic or cheesy. Very listenable, much how Tragedy is. —Todd (Prank)

ASS-END OFFEND: Becoming Our Destruction: 7"

Four hardcore rompers by the first band from Kalispell, Montana I do believe I've ever heard. Overall not much to crow about, but the couple occasions when they crank up the thrash validate repeated listens, and a screen printed cover always kicks my esteem up a notch. Bam. —Cuss Baxter (Ass-End Offend)

BAD MACHINE: Rip Your Heart: CD

If I tell some of you that this is Finnish punk rock and roll, you're gonna go buy it no matter what my review says.

(Someday, it is my great hope that Scandinavia will invade the US, put Turbonegro on the radio, and give us all free health care; but I digress.) The Bad Machines play old school punk rock and roll, in the Pagans vein. Unlike a lot of punk rock 'n' roll these days, this is actually pretty catchy. Plus they all have long hair and two of 'em wear cowboy hats. Those crazy Finns! If this were a cereal, it'd be some Finnish cereal. (Sorry, I am no expert in Scandinavian breakfast food!) —Maddy (Dead Beat)

BEAT CORP: *Permanent Jetlag*: CD

Imagine Depeche Mode trying to earn some "cool" points by pretending they're a real band and adding touches of hip hop for additional street cred. —Jimmy Alvarado (<www.beatcorp.com>)

BEN WEASEL: *Fidatevi*: CD

Anyone who knows me knows that I am a huge Screeching Weasel fan. I own all the songs in their discography. I have Weasel promo pictures and posters displayed in prominent areas around my apartment. I won't let anyone talk smack about the band. I regard Ben Weasel with high esteem, and that is why it has taken me so long to write this review of his new solo album. You see, I like what Ben has done with Screeching Weasel. I want Ben to like me, but there is no way around it: I did not like *Fidatevi*. I tried to give it time and the benefit of the doubt, but this album just does not rock the way I wish it would. I know I shouldn't compare it to the other band, but it pales in comparison. Without Jughead's happy guitar behind Ben's pissed-off-sounding vocals, the songs lack balance. On one hand, yes, the lyrics are more introspective and do show a growth in Ben as a person. I like these qualities in his column. Far be it for me to tell someone to not grow and develop as a human. But on the other hand, knowing the kind of music that Ben Weasel has put out in the past, I just wasn't impressed with this particular album. —Felizon (Panic Button)

BIG BOYS: *Wreck Collection*: CD

Sweet Jesus, I don't even know where to begin with this 'un.... This is a retooling, rather than a reissue, of a posthumous release by this Austin, Texas monster of a band, originally put out by legendary punk producer Spot on his No Auditions label back in 1987 or so. A whole slew of rare live, comp and otherwise previously unreleased tracks have been tacked onto what was already a damn near perfect album, making the whole deal that much sweeter. If, by some fundamental flaw in the space-time continuum, you've never heard of the Big Boys, do yourself a favor and buy everything you can find by them, starting with this album, as it serves nicely as an introduction to a band that impacted everyone that crossed their path, from Minor Threat to Black Flag to X to the Red Hot Chili Peppers and beyond. This was a band that transcended all the stale boundaries the hairless hardcore hordes were already imposing on punk rock by the early- to mid-'80s and made some jaw-dropping good music that cut a wide swath across every genre available to them at the time, a band that could follow up a hail of thrash beats with a Kool and the Gang cover without batting an eye, a band that could make you think while you shook your tail feather, a band that actively searched out the best ditches to skate and encouraged others to "start your own band." Pick up a copy and file it under "essen-

tial listening." —Jimmy Alvarado (Gern Blandsten)

BITCHIN': *The Night Life, the Tight Style*: CD

I was looking forward to this album so much and it rose to heavy rotation in my record collection so quickly and it just fit into my life so well that I forgot that I was supposed to review it. So here's the review, a few months late. Bitchin' in some senses fit well into the sound that so many Gainesville bands have. They have that Hot Water Music/Leatherface ability to build and release tension and add complexity to a song by staggering the tempo and letting the songs breath between vocals. But Bitchin' songs also have a nice catchiness that a lot of their Gainesville counterparts lack. When you couple that catchiness with Bitchin's rich and confident vocals, you have something special here. I've listened to their two seven inches dozens of times, and I wondered if they'd be able to translate that power and excitement into a full-length, and *The Night Life, the Tight Style* put my anxieties to rest. This is one of my top albums of the year. —Sean Carswell (No Idea)

BLACK DICE: *Lost Valley b/w Head Like a Door*: Mini CD single

I'm figuring if Black Dice have enough money to hire a very nice publicist — because they surely have no idea what *Razorcake*'s interested in — I'm invoicing them for the twenty minutes I've fuckin' wasted listening to the electronica version of changing channels on a TV. Less interesting that mic-ing your toilet and adding static. Bah! Poo! Yuck! Grrr! —Todd (<www.tigerbeat6.com>)

BLACKLIST BRIGADE/ INVERTED NINES: Split CD


This is put out by *No Front Teeth Fanzine* out of England. The packaging is an excellent DIY effort — the sleeve is foldout xerox, easy to read, and well laid out. What a great way to get people to hear some choice oi and punk. Blacklist Brigade: although it sounds a little hollow, like it was recorded in an empty boxing ring, the songs are jumpsy as fuck and a sound filled with ghosts of greats past. Think of older guys who've got a deep collection, including Stiff Little Fingers, Clash, Pogues dirges, faster Waterboys, and aren't just raping the dead, but pulling life out of bodies that most treat as deceased. Well-written mid-tempo songs, sound quality regardless. Better than recent Rancid or that horrid Transplants thingie, that's for sure. Inverted Nines: It's not lost on me that a fanzine from England is introducing me to damn spanking good band — a la the Bodies, but meaner vocals — that's almost in my back yard. Crunching, Crowd-style guitar buzz, and a couple overlaps in sound with townmates, Smogtown, but not quite as inventive. Not a bad way to be, though. Cool split. —Todd (No Front Teeth)

BLACKLIST BRIGADE, THE: *Brethren of the Coast*: CD

In a way, The Blacklist Brigade are a kick in the ass to anyone who's trying to declare punk dead. In some ways, this album sounds like three guys who sat around for years listening to Peter and the Test Tube Babies, Vice Squad, the Adicts, the Business, and so on, and, after drinking vats of beer and singing along with their arms around each other, they decided to pick up the cheapest instruments they could find, write songs

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4. Zeke, *Season of the Witch* (Safety Pin)
5. Flip Tops/Triggers, split (Johnny Cat)
6. Electric Eye, *Muscle* (Vinyl Warning)
7. Varukers, *Nothing's Changed* (Weird)
8. The Main, *To the Grave* (Hostage)
9. Hookers/Antiseen split (Steel Cage)
10. The Agitated, *Go Blue, Go Die* (Smog Veil)

Underground Medicine Mailorder, Connecticut

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2. Stitches, *Automatic* (Vinyl Dog)
3. Barse, *Council Estate* (Rapid Pulse)
4. Kill-a-watts, *Let's Get High Voltage* (Flying Bomb)
5. Kill-a-watts, *Microwave My Heart* (Hate)
6. Flakes, *First I Look at the Purse* (Hate)
7. Mystery Girls, *Turned On, Tuning In* (Bancroft)
8. Epoxies, *(We're All) Synthesized* (Dirtnap)
9. Briefs, *This Age* (Chrystal Songs)
10. Dialtones, *Four Last Blasts* (Rapid Pulse)

Know Crap Mailorder, Oregon

1. Exploding Heats, *(Making) Teenage Faces* (Vinyl Warning)
2. Main, *To the Grave* (Hostage)
3. Broken Bottles, *Radioactive San Onofre* (Hostage)
4. The Epoxies, *(We're All) Synthesized* (Dirtnap)
5. Snuky Tate, *Who Cares?* (Blammo)
6. The Bedpans, *'80s Mod* (Self-released)
7. Spitting Teeth, *Don't Believe the Hype* (Havoc)
8. Kamikazes, *Christiane* (Zaxxon Virile Action)
9. The Triggers, *Gasoline* (Vinyl Warning)
10. Various Artists, *Mechanized Death: A Tribute to the Accused* (Transparent)

like the ones they'd been singing along to, and record it on a four-track in a basement. It sounds homemade and they wear their influences on their sleeves, but damn if they don't sound great doing it. And there's more to these songs, too. These guys are more than just a throwback. I guarantee that, for every time they played their Menace albums, The Blacklist Brigade sang along with the first US Bombs record, for every time they listened to 999, they probably listened to Oxy Moron a dozen times. Hell, for all I know, they've been around long enough to inspire bands like Oxy Moron and the US Bombs (because, to be honest, I don't know anything about this band except what I hear coming through my speakers). Anyway, everything about this release, from the photocopied album cover to the lo-fi recording is at once a throwback to better days and a step forward towards better days. It's fucking awesome. —Sean Carswell (No Front Teeth)

BLACKS, THE: Last: 7"

"Mutate Radiate" is so full of sludgeslippy, fuzzy, lo-fi venom that's cleansing in its absolute dirtiness. I can't but help to think of the best bits of Mudhoney, hacked apart like in a slasher movie, quickly reassembled into a slightly different, more bloody monster. "Take This Town" is akin to the racket of the Civic Minded Five, where the constant abrasion acts like sand paper to metal — unexpectedly shiny — and it makes sense because the song is always moving forward instead of spinning its wheels in mud. Two fine cuts. —Todd (Chemical Valley)

BLOCKO/EIGHTY SIX: Split 7"

Both bands play mid tempo, fairly straight forward music, with introspec-

tive lyrics. Comparable to, say, Leatherface. "Intelligent" without being emo. The biggest difference between the two is that Blocko rocks out at 33 revolutions per minute, while on the other side, Eighty Six kicks out the jams at 45 rpm. Extra Suck Points must be given, however, because the hole in the middle of this record is too fucking small. You should not need a rubber mallet to get a record onto your turntable spindle. But on the other hand, this is a fat little record and you could probably have fun playing Frisbee golf with it. —Aphid Peewit (Bombed Out)

BLOOD BROTHERS, THE: March on Electric Children: CD

Rasping wolverines, armed with claws of noise, blasting bursts and slashing gospel-y vocals, go to At The Drive-In's house, ransack the place, then go to your childhood happy place and scream at your mom. Wham, wham, wham. A tad arty in a Locust-y way and more like a painting of a flower on wrecking ball instead of being fey, foppy, loopy, and nose wipey. I also hear cues from Born Against and Combat Wounded Veteran. Not the usual swatch of carpet I play miniature golf on, but loud and crunchy enough to keep me putting along to it. I keep pulling out of the stacks. —Todd (Three One G)

BLOODY SODS: Get Outta My Head: CD

Wasn't expecting this. Thought I was going to hear some street punk. Boy, I was wrong. This is punk with some metal overtones that is like a slap in the face. Mid '80s, East Coast punk is the flavor that I hear. The drummer whips out some mean double bass to accelerate the energy. The guitar and bass are

recorded raw to give it the nastiness it needs. Background vocals are described as gang vocals to accentuate the words. Main vocal duties are alternated between two people to keep things interesting. The music is short but angry. The tempo is pushed to the limit but not overboard. They do an amusing cover of S.O.D.'s "United Forces" which fits them comfortably. Almost didn't grab this. Glad I did. —Donofthedeath (Madskull)

BLUEBIRD: Hot Blood: CD

I can't speak for more than myself and a few other music critics, but there is nothing more annoying to at least the few of us than a CD we receive to review that is just the CD in a blank case, or worse yet, a sheath. This splits the difference by sending me one of those Comp USA scallop cases with no liner notes or cover, but a sticker telling me to contact Carol Phillips at TPG publicity. Not to say that I covet jewel boxes and professionalism, I love a lot of material found on home burned CDs with photocopied sleeves. But that gives insight into the band's personality. This seems to be the work of people trying to "make it" in the music "industry." Yep, this band has mediocre written all over them. Sure, they know how to play instruments well, but this suits them for being the band that you stand around with a drink in hand, talking to your friends while waiting for the band you came to see to get onstage after whoever these guys are. Perhaps what you talk about how being competent and passionate are completely unrelated things. You bob your head, you may even enjoy them. Hell, music is enjoyable to hear. But the next day, you refer to them as "that opening" band and forget they existed at all not long after. —Rich Mackin (Dim Mak)

BREACH: Godbox: CDEP

I remember reviewing this band around 1998. From what I remember, this band is from Sweden. I could be wrong. I dug out the previous release and it was titled *It's Me God*. No lyrics are included with this release or the previous. The scary part is "God" is included in both the titles. Like the previous, it's a heavy worship of Helmet with screamed, throaty vocals. Kind of emo-violence like with din-like tones of bottom heavy rhythms that are controlled yet abstract. This recording was done during rehearsals and not in a proper studio setting. It has a raw edge feel. Happens to fit the mood of my attitude right now. Would hate to find out that this band is religious though. —Donofthedeath (Chrome Saint Magnus)

BULEMICS, THE: Soundtrack to the Apocalypse: CD

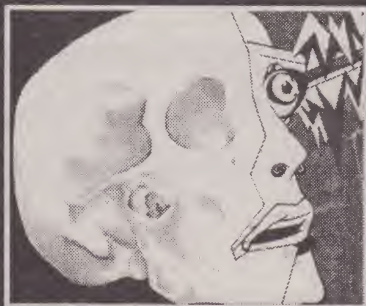
Lewd, crude, and rude. Heatstroke-induced punk'n'roll from this Texas band. It seems like all their songs are about fucking or getting to the act — music in the vein of old school Dead Boys with the nastiness of the Dwarves. Reminds me of a good night at a club with one too many beers and a rocking good time. —Donofthedeath (Steel Cage)

CAPTAIN CRUNCH: Back in Blue: 7" EP

They sound like how I've always wished Sunday morning cartoons were. Bright and glistening songs about the first punk rocker being found in a glacier, people turning into rats, mean teachers, and being happy that you're dead. (Plus, for fuck's sake, a revved up Enya tune that's really good.) Topically, they're in tune with the Dickies. Sonically, they're a

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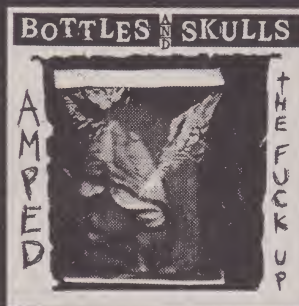
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"live at the bottom of the hill"
2xcd

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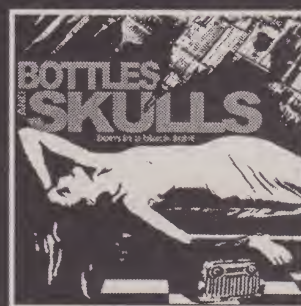
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"amped the fuck up"
cd

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bottles and skulls



"born in a black light"
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crunchy, thrusting pop mix of the Toy Dolls and Masters of the Obvious: dark or serious topics, played so you're singing along like a bright-eyed kid drooling from a sugar high and hypnotized by the rays of the TV. Cool shit and a total surprise. —Todd (Short Hare, \$4ppd.)

CARGO CULT:

Strange Men Bearing Gifts: CD
A reissue of a 1986 release by a short-lived band fronted by former Big Boy lead singer Randy "Biscuit" Turner and featuring a Jesus Lizard member or two. As can be expected, the sounds mushed together here are pretty diverse: you get everything from a jazzy neo-bop poetry piece, hardcore punk ditties, an instrumental that would've fit in nicely in the Cocteau Twins very early repertoire, cowboy-core and art-damaged rock all in one sitting. Considering this was recorded high on seventeen years ago, the tracks still sound pretty damned fresh, although the "big room" sound of the recording kinda sucks some of the power out of the performances. Still, Biscuit was/is such a great singer that this could be a fuggin' Backstreet Boys album and would sound like the best goddamned thing out on the market. This is not to downplay the efforts of those who shared stage and vinyl with the man, but, in a scene long up to its eyeballs with warblers and shouters, Biscuit has remained a rare gem among punk singers — a dude who can back personality with actual talent. Pick this up, along with all the reissued Big Boys discs and get (re)acquainted with true greatness. —Jimmy Alvarado (Touch and Go)

CARRIE NATIONS: Self-titled: CD
Some of this is sooooo good. Most of it is pretty amazing. I lose enthusiasm on a

few of the tracks. The lyric sheet is made up of twelve cartoons, one for each song, with the lyrics incorporated into the comic. An idea that could easily be pulled off badly works well because the comics are great and the print is large enough so you can read the lyrics. Plus, it's on Plan-it-x, so it's worth the whole five bucks they'll charge you for it. Gotta love those guys. —Megan Pants (Plan-it-x)

CARRION: Beggar h/w Witness Your Birth: 7"

I see the name "Carriion" and the bleak cover art and immediately I'm thinking "old school metal," then I read the enclosed blurb where someone says they sound like a cross of Black Flag and King Crimson and I begin to think, "sounds great, if they can pull it off." Well, multiple time changes and extended guitar solos don't merit that level of praise any more than demonstrating a thorough knowledge of how to use a toilet made me the mayor of Clackamas, Oregon, but there is some good heaviness going on here; heaviness I'd place in the neighborhood of Neurosis (in the weatherbeaten, scruffy-lawned house at the bottom of the hill) and I'll bet Carriion do their real shaking live. In fact, when they come to Clackamas they can play in the cafeteria here at City Hall. I think we're having meatloaf that day. —Cuss Baxter (McCarthyism)

COPPERPOT JOURNALS, THE: Plotting to Kill Your Friends: CD

In which four lads from the UK mimic various bastard shoe-gazing spirits of long dead bands. These seven songs veer from slightly crunchy, vaguely rocking angular post-core to pathetic, insipid, sniveling and pretentious lyrical and

musical content (see the title track: "To emulate the feeling of a dying soul comes easy. Our scars will offer us the chance to stay in touch with our bleeding, our release, and our memories can die before we have the chance to secure them."). I'm usually in favor of bands including lyrics sheets because I like to know what they're singing, even if I don't know what they're singing about, but in this case I think I would have been better off remaining blissfully ignorant. —Puckett (Firefly)

COWTIPPED: Some People Simply Do Not Belong: CD

I was so excited to get a CD from West Virginia. Songs about incest, Nintendo, and girls. Definitely a pop punk influenced thing, but less catchy. I give Cowtipped points for putting this out themselves, but this just didn't do it for me. If this were a cereal, it'd be Urkel O's. Nice try, but it just didn't work out. —Maddy (self-released?)

CRIMSON SWEET: Livin' in Strut: CD

Nowhere near as glummy as one would presume, this femme-fronted threesome sounds most akin to Penetration (the band, dumb-ass! Don't get any of your fresh ideas just because I said "femme-fronted threesome!") when the vocals are on (although if, during a blind taste test, someone were to tell me that it was a pre-LP Girlschool 45, i'd at least entertain the possibility of believing him or her); when the vocals go off, however, the longer they remain off, the more the band sounds like — dig this — the Wipers?!!!! (translation: Downstroked minor chords and eighth notes on the bass w/minimal if any scales/runs/fills). Keen background vocals in "Airport Novel," neat

keyboards in "No Hot on Cold," other than that, this might be the kinda thing that i listen to once more in my lifetime, tops, or it might be the kinda thing that i listen to like ten times, each time wondering "why the fuck am i listening to this again?" and on the tenth time i have some kinda wack epiphany and decide it's fucking genius. Logic suggests a result somewhere in the middle. BEST SONG TITLE: "Sad Walk at Knife-point," which i also thought was the worst song until i looked at the title (it's an instrumental), now i kinda dig it. BEST SONG: "Airport Novel" or "No Hot on Cold" FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: 1. "White Heart" starts out exactly like "I'm Not a Date (I'm an Alcoholic)" by Depo-Provera; 2. Although the band is called "Crimson Sweet," the only colors used on the CD cover are dark blue and black. —Rev. Nerb (On/On Switch; <www.ononswitch.com>)

CRUEL & UNUSUAL, THE: Killtime: CD

Mid-eighties OC-sounding punk rock damaged by a sweltering Texas sun. Not as crucial sounding as their previous release, but not exactly wallowing in the netherworld of suckdom, either. C'mon, give it a shot, you sissy. —Jimmy Alvarado (Mortville)

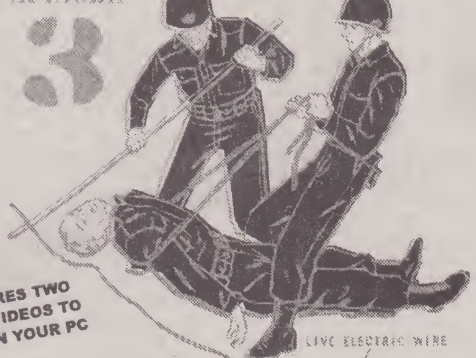
CURSE, THE: Self-titled: CDEP

Who in the fuck in Philadelphia has the ability to make and perfectly record new, melodic hardcore? I want to shake their hand. The sound's full, all the instruments snarl, and the vocalist is right in the middle of the storm. As it should be. The Curse doesn't sound like a teen-rape band, nor do they sound like the entire

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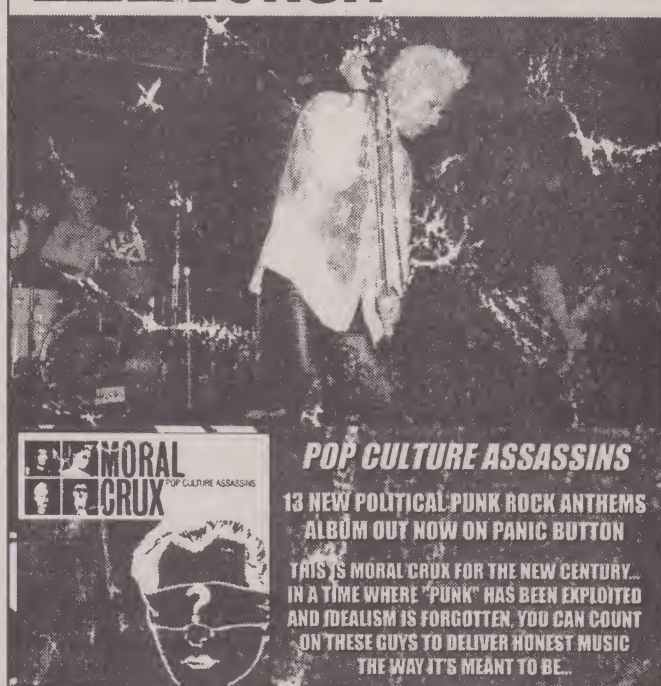
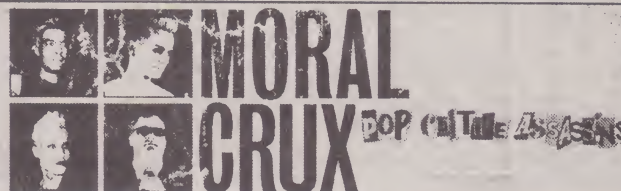
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band was sterilized, metronomed, click tracked and Pro-tooled to death. The drums don't sound like they were thudded and muddled on sponges, yet the Curse remains rasping and gnashing. Shiny, yet barbed, like huge loops of brand new concertina wire. This shit's so listenable and sounds so alive. If The Curse sucked — which they don't — it'd be glaringly obvious from the quality of the recording alone. The sound? Imagine Black Flag with less breathing room to get weird and angular, melded into Kid Dynamite (the vocalist and the intricate but not obvious shifts in pace, especially). To name contemporaries, I'd go with The Arsons and The Explosion, too. Great company to keep. I keep on turning this higher and wishing it was longer. Shit, yeah. —Todd (Hell Bent)

D.O.A.: *Win the Battle*: CD

I really wish I wasn't assigned this CD to review, as, for the last eight or ten years, I've avoided contact with any new D.O.A. product simply out of respect for my teenage memories of how great they used to be. I mean, shit, *Something Better Change* was a frickin' beacon in the unholy miasma of crap, piss, retch and swill that passed for "underground" music in 1980 — it was LOUD and FAST and ANGRY and ROCKIN' and GUTTURAL and MELODIC and STIRRING and PASSIONATE and about eighty-seven other fuckin' capitalized adjectives in an era where true Punk Rock sightings were few and far between. Absolutely positively everyone should own that album (and, NO, *Bloodied But Unbowed* does not count), recent CD reissue quite acceptable (since it doesn't skip during "Thirteen" like all the vinyl copies I've ever heard). *Hardcore '81* was a worthy followup in the Shorter/Faster/Dumber spirit of the moment, and the *War on 45* 8-song 12" which closed out '82 was a surprisingly successful blend of classic D.O.A. sounds with more traditional ROCK influences. After that, I have no fucking CLUE what happened. *Let's Wreck the Party* — with the exception of their cover of "Singin' in the Rain" and the song that immediately preceded it, "Race Riot" (since it sorta ran right into "Singin' in the Rain" and you kind of couldn't escape it) — was a total pile of limp-ass crap. On 1987's *True (North)*, *Strong and Free*, the band actually managed to come up with three great songs (out of ten total), but had to re-record a song off an early 45 ("Nazi Training Camp") and a fucking Bachman-Turner Overdrive cover to do so. In 1990, the band called it quits, but not before leaving the world with *Murder*, one of the best albums of 1990 (admittedly due to lack of competition), half of which was really quite good. If I'm hired to write the screenplay for *Get Out of My Life: The D.O.A. Story*, it ends right there. Unfortunately, that is not the case: The band — to my everlasting horror! — reformed, and began to emit entirely new strains of ill-advised records. The first reunion record, *13 Flavours of Doom*, was kind of okay, I guess; the next one, *Loggerheads*, was and is, with the exception of the two songs penned by the (tragically deceased) drummer, one of the absolutely positively WORST RECORDS I have ever heard in my LIFE (any genre). I stopped buying D.O.A. records after that; it was too much like watching a septuagenarian Tony Curtis bungle his way thru his lines in the stage musical version of *Some Like It Hot* — horrible, tragic, sad,

and not the least bit compelling in its horrible tragic sadness. The really sad thing is that there haven't been any wholesale changes to the basic D.O.A. sound in the last twenty years, really — it's just that they used to be great, and now they suck utterly. My only theory is that when you're startin' out as a band, you're just kind of flailing in the darkness, trying to make contact; you simply wanna give vent to the demons inside your head. At some point in time, your flailing will beget you an audience, and I suppose one might stop writing songs in hopes of being heard, and start writing songs with the presupposition that they are going to be heard at that time — and perhaps this is the crux of the Great Shittiness. Dunno. All I know is that not only does the band re-do two songs off of 1987's *True (North)*, *Strong and Free* — a record, mind you, where they were already so thin with songs that they hadda dip into songs they recorded in the late '70s! — and "Dead Men Tell No Tales" which I think was on *Murder* — but they also cover the Subhumans' "Fuck You" for like the third different time on record. I mean, ??? ...as a workin' joe myself, I don't begrudge anybody the right to make a living (or, for that matter, even to play music); as a D.O.A. fan, however, I'll go on record as saying the records they've put out in the last ten years are fucking god awful and I wish they'd stop releasing them. BEST SONG TITLE: "I Am Canadian" BEST SONG: I dunno, is this counting the stuff they already recorded fifteen years ago or no? FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT: The band's slogan has long been the equation "TALK - ACTION = 0." Recall from 8th grade algebra, if you will, that we can do anything to one side of any given equation so long as we perform the identical operation on the other side. Therefore, let us add the term "ACTION" to both sides. This gives us the following modified equation: "TALK - ACTION + ACTION = 0 + ACTION." Since (-ACTION) and (+ACTION) cancel each other out, the equation can now be written TALK = 0 + ACTION. Since (0 + x) = x, (0 + ACTION) = ACTION. Therefore, in its simplest form, "TALK - ACTION = 0" can be written TALK = ACTION. Sad, isn't it? —Rev. Nørb (Sudden Death)

DAYCARE SWINDLERS:

Heathen Radio: CD

Strong, lean, fast-moving, straight-to-the-point punk. No frills, no bullshit. This has the same concentrated manic energy as a good welterweight boxing match where both fighters just pepper each other's muscles with stinging jabs. Zero art. Zero filler. A straight shot of bare-knuckled, unapologetic punk rock. Refreshing. —Aphid Peewit (Go Kart)

DEAD LETTER AUCTION:

Vertigo: CD

I had almost forgotten that shoegazing could sound like this, probably because I sold every last noise-pop record I ever owned that was this horrible to a record store which pandered shamelessly to Anglophilic Britpop fans who wore their bangs in their eyes, boys and girls alike. This is rock for the no self-esteem set, music for people who long for records that were released twelve years ago but still want to pretend to keep up with the times. While I'm sure the band would call this emo (and they'd be right if they were referring to self-indulgent shit in musical form), it has still been a long time since I've heard a record

which is this singularly awful, regardless of the genre. On the bright side, I've always wanted an orange coaster. —Puckett (Excursions Into The Abyss)

DEADGUY: *Work Ethic*: CD

I tried. To. Care, but your Hard-Ass-Fuck! stance. And your diaperbaby whining. Sent me to bed. My word, it's boring. —Cuss Baxter (Blackout!)

DEFIANCE:

Out of the Ashes: CD

Revisionist anarchy-core, meaning it's heavy on the oi influences and yet maintains the stereotypical sloganeering first popularized by Crass, utilized by Discharge and Conflict and thereafter taken to ridiculous extremes. While I don't disagree with most of the sentiments expressed here, their lyrics come off as one big whine and their fuckin' use of the fuckin' word "fuck" was pretty fuckin' ridiculous if not fuckin' gratuitous, and didn't fuckin' make them sound any more fuckin' angry than they fuckin' did before, which was the intended fuckin' effect, I fuckin' think. Overall, they were better than some I've heard wallowing in this pigeonhole, but this complacency with sounding just like everyone else is just exasperating. Ain't a damn thing defiant about being yet another cheap knockoff. Then again, I guess individuality and creativity are anathema when you're "another cheap product for the consumer's head." —Jimmy Alvarado (Punk Core)

DESTROY MIRANDA: *A Step in Natural Selection*: CD

Screamo vocal tendencies mixed with some really jangly and angular pleasant melodies (think D.C. post-core). I remember being at a show that this band played and intensely disliking their music. While this album doesn't make me a fan by any stretch of the imagination, I wasn't in as much of a hurry to skip to the next record. —Puckett (Lola)

DFI: Self-titled: CD

This CD starts out strong with a sloppy ripper of a first song but then something goes horribly wrong and we wind up with a drawn out and overly elaborate mating dance between a guitar and a drum machine that lasts for pretty much the rest of the disc. Best I can tell, this so-called "intellectual metal" is the work of one man, a Dave Didonato, who also plays guitar in J Church. I don't think I've ever heard J Church, but as of now, I'm less likely than ever to want to hear them. Too many bands, too little time. Plus I'm a little leery of anyone who's spent this much time shut up in his bedroom with his guitar and his metronome. Sci-fi geek punk just leaves me a little cold. The cover of this CD shows Mr. Didonato (I think) with a bloodied nose — something of a common sight, I'm guessing; with music this annoying, he's probably been fed more than a few knuckle sandwiches in his time. I've always had a soft spot for bands like the Melvins or Flipper who brazenly fuck with their audiences, tripping up the listeners' expectations and assumptions — but it's a tricky thing to pull off. Annoying can all too easily turn into self-indulgent. And when that happens, well, that's when indulgent little geeks get popped in the bezer. There's also a poorly drawn, pixilated cartoon showing Dave D. and his drum machine about to get the algebra beat out of them by an unruly mob of mohawked punks. Obviously, the role of "annoy" is one he relishes. And I respect the

hell outta that — to a point. Today's Lesson: Spending too much time with a drum machine is a little like spending too much time with a blow-up sex doll. It might be time to get out of the house once in a while, Dave ol' buddy. —Aphid Peewit (Honey Bear)

DILLINGER FOUR: *Situationist Comedy*: CD

Todd wouldn't shut up about these guys and I hadn't even heard them so he sent me a copy. I was supposed to see them last summer but they cancelled several dates of their tour and mine was the first one they dropped. I have a feeling that if my first exposure to them was live I'd feel differently about them but I guess I'll have to wait to find that out. My first few listens didn't impress me much — I thought they sounded too much like too many other bands, and maybe they do, but repeated listens (as per Todd's recommendation) have driven the whole thing further under my skin and my current take is that they sound much like many of the RIGHT bands (I can't even tell which ones anymore) and I guess that's really all you can hope for in the end. Everyone sounds like someone, might as well sound like someone good. —Cuss Baxter (Fat)

DISCONTENT: Self-titled: LP

I'm a bit slower than the people around me. I played this LP a bunch and something was very different. My expectations were extremely high. Their *Who Killed Vinyl?* 7" on Hostage, I still believe, is quite possibly one of the unsung gems of oi in the past five years and their *Shot Down* CDEP was a teaser of a follow-up. They were posed to claim the kingdom of angry, fisticuff, non-cheesy street rock, neck-and-neck with Bonecrusher. Full of tough, hard stuff they didn't skimp on the hooky melodies. Then it struck me. Discontent found rock, evidenced by the fancier guitar parts, the slower, more filled-in drumming, and the vocals getting less gruff. This, in and of itself, isn't a bad thing. I like rock, but instead of continuing down a path where Discontent could have been undisputed heavy-weight kings — there really were few contenders — they've gone into an arena with literally thousands of bands already mastering the same type of music. From the New Bomb Turks to Turbonegro to Zeke to the Candy Snatchers, the bar has been set so high by some already badass bands that have been playing so long. This LP is all competently played and does have some right-on songs, but if I had no prior experience with listening to the band, I'd probably like this a bit more. I was just expecting something different, like spitting my teeth out from getting hit in the mouth instead of a possible opener for Motorhead (who I like.). —Todd (Disaster)

DISGUST:

The Horror of It All...: CD

Here is a band I haven't heard from in a long time. Their first release and only release that I have is *Brutality of War* CD that I think came out in 1993. It was and still is a great release! Forward in time, my brother hands me a copy to trade me. If you have met my brother (Katz) before, he is like the punk encyclopedia. I get the 411 from my brother about what's been going on with the band. He gives me the titles of all their releases, format, label and order of releases. Well, the band has gone through some line-up changes too. The only remaining member is the bass play-

er from the original release that I own, but the formula is the same. If you notice the "dis" prefix, you know nine times out of ten that it's going to be Discharge (the band) influenced. These guys are one of the elite performers of this genre. This disc shows that they continue the legacy. From the opening instrumental title track and all the way through, you are body slammed to the floor from the blaring energy of the music: three bottom-heavy chords of crusty, metal rage. Lyrics of war and injustices that take place on this planet keep the theme in a haiku-like style. If heavy is what you are looking for, buy and spin. —Donofthead (Crimes Against Humanity)

DISTRACTION, THE: Calling All Radios: CD

Kudos to the graphic designer. This looks way better than it is. Starts out with "My Sharona" type drums, then adds a bizarrely "We Got the Beat"-esque bass riff, then everything kicks in and it sounds nothing like the aforementioned whatsoever. My best description is "apparent teenagers trying (either knowingly or unwittingly) to emulate the Ruts, minus the reggae parts, with lyrics that, a la Head's *The Monkeys* album, fail to be minimalistic enough to be interesting solely as minimalism, but succeed at being just minimalistic enough to come off as entirely deficient. But in a nice sleeve." How a band can play fourteen songs in twenty-eight minutes and still sound like they're strictly from plodsville is beyond me (they musta grown up listening to the Stitches, another band where you'd listen to 'em for like twenty minutes and swear you'd been chained to one spot for three hours). I mean, i'm sure this is supposed to sound like some kind of music i really like, but i really can't put my finger on what kind of music that could possibly be. The beginning of the second side is pretty awright, though. **HELPFUL HINT FROM YOUR UNCLE NÖRB:** Don't bug mom to peg your pantslegs for you until you get the lead out of your asses. **BEST/WORST/MOST CREATIVE SONG TITLE:** "Rock and Roll" **BEST SONG:** "Hijack My Heart" or "Razorblade Kiss" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** I think "Rock and Roll" is about *MRR*. I find the line "you don't play rock and roll" rather ironic, considering those singing it aren't exactly wiping Little Richard from Earth's collective memory. —Rev. Nörb (Dirtnap)

DOWNTOWN BROWN: Moist & Ridiculous: CD

If I owned a farm, I'd scrape me up the biggest pile of horseshit I could, stand back, and toss this disc on top of it just to watch the horseshit dive outta the way so's no one would think that it was in any way associated with this disc. More succinctly, to say this sucked would be an insult to bands that suck. —Jimmy Alvarado (<www.staticrecords.com>)

DRESSY BESSY: Little Music: CD

This would be the perfect band to having playing the big party if you were Jennifer Love Hewitt and something dramatic would happen and the music would just fade out, but people would keep dancing. For anything else it just pretty much blows. —Megan Pants (Kindercore; <www.kindercore.com>)

DRIVE LIKE JEHU: Yank Crime: CD

This album was originally released on Interscope Records in 1994. It was the

follow up to their amazing, self-titled first album. Since it was still '94 and I wasn't quite as savvy as I am now, I'd still pick up albums on major labels. I bought a copy and I wasn't disappointed. In fact, I fucking loved *Yank Crime*. I spent so much time getting high and listening to it back in those days that, when I put this reissue of the album on now, I catch a contact buzz. So, yeah, I'm excited that this album was re-released. It's one of those albums that inspired so many crappy bands that you almost have to own it just so that it can stick up for itself. But more than that, Drive Like Jechu was a groundbreaking band, a band that was able to take some of the best elements of Sonic Youth and Fugazi and Rocket From The Crypt (John Reis from RFTC was also in Drive Like Jechu) and fuse them into wild, divergent, powerful songs. At times, Drive Like Jechu were a bit self-indulgent. You do have to sit through thirty seconds of feedback just to get to the song "Super Unison," and they're not afraid to repeat certain riffs so many times that you go through stages of liking it, getting sick of it, hating it, and liking it again, all in the context of one song. And, on this re-release, they've included the original version of "Sinews," something that was probably best left wallowing in obscurity. But Drive Like Jechu's originality more than makes up for their periods of self-indulgence. This re-issue also includes two tracks that weren't included the first time this album was released: "Bullet Train to Vegas" and "Hand over Fist". Those two songs may be the best thing I've heard from Drive Like Jechu. —Scan Carswell (Swami)

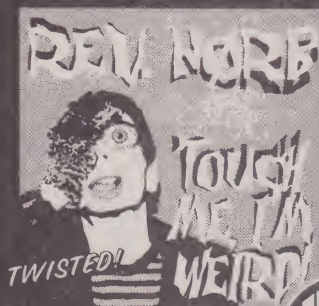
DROP DEAD/ TOTALITAR: Split: 7"

What a great combo for a split! I have always liked Drop Dead. They are fast but unique. They always seem to be a step above their peers. The two LPs I have by them are pure classics. They contribute six songs on their side. I believe you can only put about 7-1/2 minutes of music, max, per side on a 7" record. So you know that they are giving you a mass quantity of manic thrash for your gritting teeth to enjoy. Swedish legends, Totalitar, round out this split with their brand of crust meets Dis-core. Three songs that are abrasive as sandpaper and as energetic as a new set of batteries. Two different interpretations of the international madness we call punk. —Donofthead (Prank)

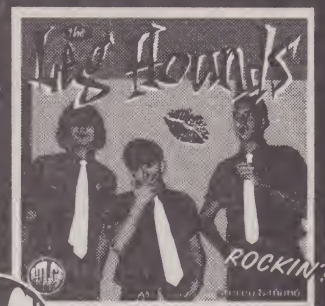
DS-13: No One Will Thank You When You Are Dead - A Collection of Old, Rare, Unreleased, and Live Shit: CD

Up there in importance in recent years along with Crudos' *Discography* and Charles Bronson's *Complete Discography*, this is a handy way to pick up the bits and pieces not on their full lengths (get *Killed by the Kids*, if you feel like getting that fuzzy feeling of being staple gunned to a wall), some live tracks, and four previously unreleased ones. Demon System 13? Who's that? One of the banner holders for DIY international hardcore, living proof that *American Hardcore: A Tribal History*'s author, Steven Blush is a fucking idiot asshole for claiming any and all hardcore dead and irrelevant ten years ago. DS-13, as well as Crudos and Bronson, were in the spearhead to a nuclear arsenal of bands that continued, raised, and kept relevant the state of hardcore, long after Black Flag. The Circle Jerks, and Minor Threat (three great bands) gave up the ghost. No-bullshit, no stupid metal-disguised-as-punk-

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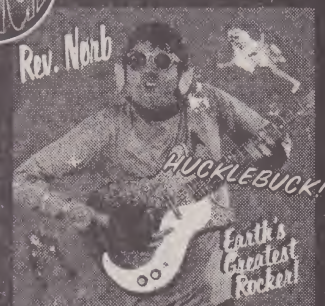
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because-we're-bald Victory-conspired cruddup. Just pure, fast, hard, intelligent Swedes, who never lost their sense of humor (as evidenced by song titles "Upperclass Vegans Vs. Non-PC Bums" and "The Return of Hardcore Jesus") while pounding away at forty songs. A great introduction to a band that, unfortunately, called it quits. —Todd (Deranged)

EAST ARCADIA: *We Only See From Where We Stand*: CD Pop punk with meaningful, if non-specific lyrics. Some bands tell you society sucks, some show you how it does, or why it does, these guys write metaphors around it. There is a definite posi-core vibe to this — there is bad, but a feeling we will overcome. I keep going back and forth between if these guys remind me more of Strike Anywhere (which they sound a LOT like — but more in an affinity sense than a rip off one) or the weird rarity of Christian punk that is more punk than Christian (it does exist, it just is really unusual). I don't mean preaching, I mean having lyrics about personal responsibility and being good and society and that, and music that backs it up. I like this, but I kept looking for the Jesus references that are hidden somewhere. —Rich (Gekido Comet)

ELEPHANT MAN: Self-titled: 7" This Bay Area band (or project?) features members of Capitalist Casualties, Agents of Satan and Plutocracy. Lyrics, I assume, are sung in Japanese because that is how they are written out and I can't tell from the screaming pouring out of my speakers. The music is heavily Black Sabbath soaked but tends to veer out of control into the thrash vein. Slow, fast, slow, fast. It makes me dizzy. An aural experience of pain and despair with rage and aggression. Like smoking pot for awhile, then doing some lines of methamphetamine and some heavy drinking to come back down. Their cover of Black Flag's "Thirsty and Miserable" kicks ass on Lemmy's version on the *Rise Above* comp. Music that would put my nut sack into knots. —Donofthead (Impatience or Indifference)

EVEN WORSE: *You're Ruined Everything*: CD For those either too young to know or too brain-damaged to remember, this is an old New York punk band that featured Jack Rabid, also known as the head honcho at *Big Takeover Magazine*. The band existed during that awkward time between the downfall of the Big Apple's "classic" punk scene surrounding CBGB's and Max's, and the rise of that city's "classic" hardcore scene, centered around the 171A and, uh, CBGB's. The music contained on this disc consists of a great "lost" album, and a great live set. The music is raw, crude and infused with a healthy dose of humor, as it should be. If you do happen to remember 'em, all their big hits can be found here, including the tracks from the *NY Thrash* tape and a studio take of "We Suck," which this reviewer remembers only a live version being released prior (which is here also), which can be found on his tattered copy of the *You Can't Argue with Suckness* comp. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (The Big Takeover; <www.bigtakeover.com>)

EXCESSIVES, THE: Self-titled: CD Any band that photoshops a 'hawk and a guitar case onto the original picture from the marquee poster of *The Exorcist* is definitely going to get pulled outta the

review pile for Dale to check out. That CD cover fucking rocks and I'm hoping there's a shirt available of it. The Excessives' full length here is chock full o' skanking surprises like "Knife Fight on the Beach," "Shithead," "Side Track" (which sounds a lot like Dee Dee Ramone's song, "I'm Zonked Los Hombres"), and a rollicking version of The Simpletones "I Like Drugs." It's eerily ironic that they chose to cover an old Simpletones tune, 'cause the first band that the Excessives reminded me of was So. Cal's own Riotgun, and believe it or not, ex-Simpletone Danny Ruiz has been playing bass for Larry Hernandez's almighty Riotgun for some time now. Small fucking world. Street punk fans might take a shine to this — chunk riff heavy but not being stingy with the up-tempo jams, either. Would like to see this outfit live. Besides a hot-diggity-fucking-dawg of a CD, it's also enhanced as well — you get three videos to check out on your computer, which are rather cool because they're of The Excessives whirling it up at gigs, all with plenty of crowd interaction to boot. I love it when bands include this stuff on their discs. Now all I ask of you guys is to write a song entitled, "Pazuzu," and you've got a fan for the existence of your band. —Designated Dale (Longshot; <www.longshotmusic.com>)

F-HOLE: Self-titled 7" EP I feel like a fuck hole for making it to the second song. —Megan Pants (F-Hole)

FIRST GRADE CRUSH: *Our Time Down Here*: CD The press release says they've been compared to D4 and RFTC. I plan to hunt down the people who said those things and hurt them. And not nice like last time, either. I will happily admit that this band is quite reminiscent of Fishbone, Less Than Jake and, in Dickie's less gruff moments, the Mighty Mighty Bosstones. From this, you should infer vaguely punk-like guitar-driven music, a horn section and a heavy ska influence. You can also infer anything else you like, because this record does fuck all for me. —Puckett (Jump Up)

FIVE DAY MESSIAH: *New Rock Regime*: CD NOTICE TO BANDS THAT WANT TO BE REVIEWED: If you decide to make a stupid joke song that sounds nothing like the rest of your music, make it really short if possible, but if nothing else, do NOT put it first on your album. The first track was so lame and horrible that I almost took out the CD and threw it away, knowing it would have no resale value and that nobody I know would like it... but wait! The rest of the songs are... real! Reminds me of the art punk I see live in converted loft spaces with DIY shows with lots of metal influence. Screamy bike punk stuff! Wow! These guys would have made a really great CD if they didn't ruin it with that annoying first track that I would have to fast forward to listen to this album ever again. Imagine for your birthday, your friends baked you the best tasting cake ever, it just has dog doo for decoration. I would likely endorse these guys live, other releases by them, or a version of this album in reverse order. —Rich (Not Bad)

FLIP TOPS, THE: *All Worked Up*: CD I haven't stopped listening to this since it came in the mail. Everything about this album is spot-on. Todd says it sounds like a slower Candy Snatchers without

operatic vocals. I hear Dead Boys in the guitar, but only on certain songs. Some of their lyrics are pretty dumb, though: "Makes me drink until I'm drunk and then I'm wasted... wasted." Heavily rock'n'roll influenced. Helluva good record here. —Megan Pants (Rip Off)

GAY, THE: Self-titled: CDEP Ten minutes and thirteen seconds divided into three songs of such excruciatingly banal, drippy indy rock that you'll want to pull your own head off and hurl it at the speakers until the bad noise goes away or you bleed to death. Everything you've ever hated about college radio boiled down to its horrible essence and stamped onto this disc belched up from a bowel of hell I don't even want to think about. God save us. —Aphid Peewit (Mint)

GBH: *Leather, Bristles, Studs and Acne*: CD At long last, a reissue of this legendary band's greatest work, and all I can say is it's about friggin' time. This is it, kiddos, their finest hour. While the work that followed was by no means terrible, this is GBH at their best, a standard they have often come damn close to but have not quite surpassed over the years. Compiled on this beautiful hunk of plastic are the *Leather Bristles, Studs and Acne* mini-LP, the *Sick Boy* EP and the *No Survivors* EP and every song here, from the opener "Race Against Time," through "Lycanthropy" past "Self Destruct" and to the closer "Am I Dead Yet," is a classic. To sweeten the deal, they've included the original record's "hidden" track, "Alcohol," which makes its digital debut here. So mandatory it ain't funny. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

GEE STRINGS, THE: *Arrest Me*: CD Jean-Luc at Headline Records convinced me to pick up a copy of this album. He told me that they sounded just like the Avengers, but with something more to it. And he's right. Like the Avengers, The Gee Strings have really cool female vocals and good melodies. But there is something more to The Gee Strings. I wouldn't say that they're better than the Avengers. Just that The Gee Strings have learned how to speed up the mid-tempo, catchy songs. There's a good variety to the songs, so that, even though all the songs do have a lot in common with each other, listening to the album doesn't sound like you're listening to the same song twelve times in a row. And, if you listen to it enough, each song is guaranteed to get stuck in your head for one full day. If you're thinking that you need to listen to more female-fronted bands, here's a good place to start. —Sean Carswell (Dead Beat)

GODSTOMPER: *Hell's Grim Tyrant*: CD WAAAAIIIIIIIIIIHHHHHHHH!!!!!! GRRRRRRRRRR!!!!!! HHUUUUHH-HHHAAAAHHHH!!!!!! The best thing about grindcore is that, no matter how bad whatever you're listening to is, you can bet your boots it'll be over relatively quick. —Jimmy Alvarado (Enterruption)

GOONS, THE: *Live at the Black Cat*: CD On the first couple of listens, I wasn't that interested, but something kept me playing it more and more. Sure, there's a big love for Minor Threat, some Negative Approach, and, surprisingly, some early Dicks (mostly in the voice, and not to mention the lead singer looks a hell of a lot like Gary Floyd) but, most-

ly, what's good about the Goons is they know their limitations, don't try to get too fancy, and end up playing some good straight-ahead, extremely listenable DC-style hardcore with some nice hooks. It doesn't sound like they're playing in a graveyard, hoping for the ghosts of the past to rise up to hootenanny with, but spray painting their own noise on the tombstones. Well weathered, veteran, fun stuff that gets the thumbs up. —Todd (Squirrel Heart)

GROOVIE GHOUIES: *Go! Stories*: CD Please bear in mind that there is only ONE Groovie Ghouies album in the universe — the other things you buy every year are just software updates (which is, of course, not to imply that any one Groovie Ghouies album is more "THE" Ghouies album than another; the One True Groovie Ghouies album exists only as a Platonic Ideal, a thought construct that serves as blueprint for that which we experience in the everyday world. Just thought I'd clear that up). That said, let the record show that this is my favorite Ghouies album of all time for a variety of reasons, one of which is that it's got the best cover (in the top purple wedge, Roach casually maneuvers her lunar module past a rocket ship containing armed, green aliens; in the middle orange wedge, a cheerful red Tyrannosaurus pursues Scampi, who flees across the rugged desert on horseback; and in the bottom blue wedge, an intense purple squid bears down on a scuba-diving Kepi. When YOUR band is able to stave off the assaults of aliens, dinosaurs, and sea monsters and still remain so damn chipper, THEN you can start faulting my logic). Another reason, strange as this may sound, is that it's got the best songs (I actually first heard this at a local record shoppe, and was so taken with the brilliance of the lead-off track, "Let's Do It Again" ["I'm not tired and I'm not bored and I'm not broken and I'm not sore, you ask me what I want? It's more! Let's do it again..."] that, although there were multiple avenues I could have pursued towards the goal of securing a copy without money having to change hands, I bought it on the spot, cash on the barrel-head, 'cause it was so cool [I mean, think about it: Kepi anticipated his own redundancy, acknowledged it, took steps to combat it, then turned it into a positive! Like, high five!]. When I got it home, I decided the record was so great that I wanted my friends to think that I got it as a promo, so I snipped the corner off the album cover. Then, later, I DID get a copy as a promo! I don't know what to make of all that, morally). The entire first side is more or less boss, with peachy backing vocals in "Mess Me Up" (come to think of it, there should be more backing vocals on Groovie Ghouie records, it'd help fill out the sound. Pop-punk without backing vocals is like pizza without crushed red peppers: It can be done, I guess, but why?), and cool vocal phrasings in the sorta-like-the-Riverdales-song—"I Think About You During the Commercials"—but-way-better "School Is In" compelling me to state that Kepi would be one of the most underrated vocalists in punk rock today if anybody actually bothered to rate him. Now, of course, there is a certain segment of the populace that wonders exactly WHY the world would need a more-or-less G-rated (Kepi does use swear words sometimes to express his GREAT ENTHUSIASM!) hybrid of the Ramones, Misfits, and Riverdales, the tip of my Iceberg of Rebuttal being I.

They're fun and they rock; 2. The band and the band's records never get any worse-sounding regardless of how many times one hears them; and 3. A hundred years from now, everyone reading this is gonna be dust EXCEPT the Ghoulies, because they're freaky undead cartoon characters who will still look twenty-four years old, fit into the same black jeans, and be touring to support their 138th album, *20 Second Century*. They're like a cool plastic thing in a landfill: It can be sitting there for an eternity, but all ya gotta do is pull it out and wash the dirt off and it's good as new. Ghoulies are GO-er than ever! **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Someone Is Always Not Happy" **BEST SONG:** "The Bay Bridge Club" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Once my friend booked the Groovie Ghoulies in his club and he didn't have money to make flyers, so I tried to help him out by putting signs up in front of the venue that said "GROOVY GHOULIES TONIGHT!!!" but they were torn down by angry mobs because I missedpell "Groovie." —Rev. Nerb (Stardumb)

GUNMOLL/FIFTH HOUR HERO: Split CD

Wow! I had never heard Fifth Hour Hero before, and it's so damn good! The girl vocals sound a little like Allison from Discount (a compliment!), the riffs are catchy, and the lyrics are just what we punks need to not kill ourselves in the middle of Dubya's term: "What's that quivering?/ One day it will come, strongly overcome/Working in shadow, making vibrations." And then, "We're everything. We're giving sense to that masquerade. We're the children, the women, and the poor. We're the people of this earth." Of course, Fifth Hour

Hero is from Canada, so maybe they have reason to be a little more optimistic. Or not. Great stuff, though. Gunmoll does the whole Hot Water Music, melodic punk thing, and does it well. Gruff vocals, introspective lyrics, a touch of Jawbreaker, you know the deal. Also really good; but I kept going back to Fifth Hour Hero. If this split were a cereal, it'd be French Toast Crunch. An unexpected treat! —Maddy (No Idea)

GUTTERMOUTH: *Gusto*: CD

Holy shit! Sean sent me a Blink 182 CD, expecting me to listen to it. Wait a minute. This says Guttermouth. What the fuck? Is this the same snotty smart-assed punk band I used to listen to about ten years ago? No... can't be, but the packaging says, sure enough, that it is, Mark Adkins & Co. Mark, what are you doing? This shit is terrible. My guess is that you are in the midst of some mid-life crisis and you are realizing that you are too old to pick up teenage girls anymore. So, you catch a glimpse of what Blink 182 is doing and how easy it is to make that kinda inane music and have tons of screaming teenage girls paw all over you. I can't say I'm not jealous in that department, either. Hell, if I had a quarter for every teenage girl I jerked... uh... nevermind. But is it worth giving up your dignity for? Many can argue that question and it looks like you answered it "yes." Well, I wish you guys luck, but I don't plan on listening to anything else you put out if this continues. Just some advice as we part ways — pay attention to your statutory rape laws from state to state. The age of consent varies greatly. If you are looking for the younger ones, let me recommend the southern states. Check out

<www.sexlaws.org> for further info on the topic. Good luck and be careful. —Toby Tober (Epitaph)

HATE NO. 3: *Crucified*: 7"

Do I like Japanese punk? Fuck ya! This band kicks major ass by playing mid-tempo, metallic Jap-core, crust, and old school. The guitars are strong and abrasive. The drums are heavy and pounding. The musicians sound very accomplished and keep things from getting generic. Paintbox is a good reference point. I need to see a dentist after the swift kick in the teeth that I got. —Donofthedeat (Yoakemae)

HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE: *Adulterer Oriented Rock*: CD

Unzip the half of your brain that thinks. Huck it out the window. Use the other half and occupy it with rough monkey sex, crayons shoved too far up your nose, bleeding fingers guitar, a slutty love of the Mummies, the Motards, and the Dwarves, the smell of cars burning out, all sliding up the shaky knees of your daiquiri-drunk date. Perfect, no-thinking, funny/blunt (as in "England, That's a Place to Hate," and "Brit Pop Sucks"), bloodshot Swedish garage fest that slows down when they die. Awesome. Think angry dogs, bullwhips, and a dude that carries a mannequin head for self-service, I presume. As subtle as a fist fuck. What's not to love? This is a forty-seven song collection of their singles. —Todd (Coldfront)

HERE KITTY KITTY:

***Daddy's Girl*: CD**

Let's pull out some names from history's past. I hear some Ramones, Sleater Kinney, Ramones, Queers and that old school death rock band, Voodoo

Church. Simple, power chord-driven melodies that only back up the magical experience of the band. They assault you with a three female vocal attack that makes the music sweet and infectious. The production has a very live feeling to it. That leads to a more intimate listening experience. I'm not sure if this is their debut, but it was a nice preview for me. The opening track, "How Now" is a great track and the funny cover of Lita Ford's "Kiss Me Deadly" is a perfect! —Donofthedeat (Lorelei)

HOBART: Self-titled: CDEP

The bass player of Hobart sent me this CD to review, along with a note saying that he'd read one of my reviews and decided that, judging from my review, I didn't know shit about music in Tucson. He sent me a whole package of music that was supposed to educate me. In the package were a couple of Blacks seven inches (so I knew he had good taste); a CD he burned for me with a bunch of cool Tucson bands like the Weird Lovemakers, the Blacks, and Los Federales; and this CDEP. It was hell of a good package, and I'll take criticism like that any day if the criticism comes with cool music to back it up. I'll have to admit that I really scrutinized this EP the most, thinking to myself, if this guy says he knows so much about music, let's see how he backs it up. So I listened really closely to these three Hobart songs as they came blaring out of my speakers all disjointed and noisy and solid and in blocks of time that far exceeded the requisite two-minute punk song. It was a little arty. I could hear some Hot Snakes in the guitar. The vocals started, and my first thought was, oh, shit, they should've stuck with just the instrumental parts. The songs con-

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tinued to wind up and build into this crazy ball of tension. And, luckily, they remembered to bring on the rock. These songs were way better than I hoped they'd be. I decided to listen to the EP a few more times and hope that I could find something to criticize about them, but the more I listened, the less criticism I had. By the third listen, I even liked the vocals. What can I say? This shit rips. Consider me educated. —Sean Carswell (Sumo Agnew)

JACK HOUSEN: *Two Lane Road*: CD

Some pretty good stuff here from a guy who is going off the beaten path and actually writing songs rather than merely following a well-worn template to fit into some prefabricated genre. His style is engaging, sometimes maybe a bit mellow, but the arrangements are inventive enough to warrant future listens. —Jimmy Alvarado (Jack Housen)

JAWBREAKER: *Etc. 2 X LP*

It's been a long time since I've heard new-to-me Jawbreaker songs. I really enjoy the sense of raw discovery that Jawbreaker provided me for the years they were actively releasing records. They're amazing — they came at punk rock, cracked its walnut and got to the soft flesh, but never forgot the texture of hardness. The duality was both poetic and durable. This is a collection of some early almost-demo songs (the demo, *Rise*, had Jon Liu singing every song but one), comp tracks, split 7"s, and out-of-print singles, all the way through their last release, the still-controversial *Dear You*. The songs are placed in chronological order, which is a great way to see how they refined and redirected their sound without abandoning what made them great: the power of three instruments ever inter-locking then breaking to breathe and Blake's tender knife-to-throat urban lullaby lyrics. If you've never heard of 'em, take Leatherface, move 'em to California, shake on Husker Du's bulletproof songwriting skill, open up an exposed soul, duct tape it together in a big ball, and stuff into a rattling tour van. The LP record dust jackets are great, too, with scans of Walter Matthau's attorney ordering a cease and desist from using one of the Odd Couples' pictures on the *Busy 7"* and a play-by-play of every song by all three members. Highlights: "Split" off their split 7" with Samiam that was released with *No Idea Magazine*, the spot-on cover of the Psychedelic Furs' "Into You Like a Train," "First Step," (a song slated for what I consider their magnum opus, *24 Hour Revenge Therapy*) and the re-do of "Boxcar." Only one song makes me cringe — the U2 medley that segues into the Misfits "Skulls." All in all, though, this is fantastic. Highly recommended. I'm stoked this stuff is easier to find now and all in one place. —Todd (Blackball)

JELLO BIAFRA: *Machine Gun in the Clown's Hand*: 3X CD

Another ultra-long player of spoken word from Biafra, this one focusing on 9/11, the resulting war on terrorism and the general corporate and governmental shenanigans that all of the banging of the war drums is supposed to be covering up. Love him or hate him, you've gotta give Biafra his props. At a time in American history when civil liberties are being wholly done away with and openly questioning the government's actions could result in a nice long jail stay (or worse), he's there, reminding us all that no matter what sugarplum dreams the major

corporate media lulls us sleep with, no matter how many pills the Ministry of Wellness force-feeds us to make us "better," no matter how many times King Georgie the Lesser insists that the only way to achieve peace is through all-out war, when punk seems to be more content to wallow in an insipid realm of fart jokes and affected posturing and suckle the corporate nipple than to actually raise a little ruckus, reality is sometimes worse than your wildest nightmares. Call him paranoid, but that don't mean they ain't out to get you. —Jimmy Alvarado (Alternative Tentacles)

JERRYCAN: *Prog-ress*: CD

Sounds like college boys slumming with the punks to garner at least some semblance of a music career. —Jimmy Alvarado (<www.jerrycan.com>)

JEZUS AND THE GOSPEL-FUCKERS/AGENT ORANGE: *Couldn't Care Less*: CD

Tracks from two of Holland's legendary hardcore bands are once again made available to the teeming masses. As can be expected, the proceedings are loud, rude and up to here with Discharge influence. Definitely worth the time if you can get your mitts on it. —Jimmy Alvarado (Kangaroo)

JOAN OF ARC: *So Much Staying Alive and Lovelessness*: CD

I didn't even make it through the first song, "On a Bedsheet in the Breeze on the Roof." At best I'd say that it's kind of like Pearl Jam inviting a hot new guitarist to jam with them in an acoustic set. I'd burn this at the stake any day. —Megan Pants (Jade Tree)

KILLS, THE: *Black Rooster*: 7"EP

The mysterious VV and Hotel come off like a cross between Mecca Normal and Royal Trux but the result is way more satisfying than anything either of those minimalist bands on this debut EP. Mostly 'cause the Kills don't sound minimalist at all. The potential of every song is deftly realized. "Cats Claw" starts out like a lost Mick Taylor-era Rolling Stones track and then kicks it up a notch with some seriously fuzzed out guitar and "Black Rooster" sounds like ZZ Top on meth amphetamines. Side two gives us "Wait," a sing-songy blues number and "Dropout Boogie" re-envision the Kinks "You Really Got Me" riff as an angry blues number. They don't sound like the White Stripes. —Bob Cantu (Dim Mak)

LANDSPEEDRECORD: *Good Housekeeping*: CD

Arty college rock/emo. Not only did I not like it for what it was, I disliked it for what it wasn't. There wasn't one ridiculously fast song on here, and with a name like *Landspeedrecord*, I don't think it's unreasonable to expect such things. They also failed to provide a single tip on how to more effectively maintain a certain level of cleanliness at the crib. What a letdown. Distributed by Dischord, as if that really makes a difference. —Jimmy Alvarado (Ambiguous City)

LAST IN LINE: *Self-titled*: 7"

One of the best hardcore bands out of Mass. They're right up there with Out Cold, Cops'n'Robbers, and A Poor Excuse. Fast, hard, and right on the mark. They make me homesick for east coast shows. —Megan Pants (Gloom)

LEFT WITH NOTHING: *Good Things Come to Those Who Wait*: CD

You dudes need some Prozac. Oh, and metal disguised as hardcore bites the weenie. —Jimmy Alvarado (Excursion)

LIPSTICK PICKUPS/BIKINI BUMPS: *Split 7"*

The Lipstick Pickups play great poppy rock and roll (with a clear Bobbyteens/Nikki & the Corvettes influence!), with cool girl vocals. The Bikini Bumps play good old-fashioned poppy rock and roll. If striped t-shirts, tight pants, and skinny ties are yer thing, you know what I mean, you'll eat this up! If this were a cereal, it'd be Fruit Loops! Punk! —Maddy (Geykido Comet)

LOST SOUNDS, THE:

***Rat's Brains & Microchips*: CD**
The last Lost Sounds, *Black Wave*, had me super confused. There were parts I truly liked, but, man alive, if I'd space out for a bit, I'd glance back over at the stereo and feel that someone had stuffed a sea urchin and some tight underwear on me and thrust me into a prog-rock desert party whence I got a body-wide, nasty sunburn. It got me downright confused. But, *Rat's Brains & Microchips* rectifies that by chopping down the song length, stripping the trippiness, and comes blazing out confidently. Instead of gingerly picking influences off the ground like garments at an over-stocked Goodwill, you get full tackles of a bunch of diverse shit. Especially when Alicja takes the vocal helm, there's Siouxsie and the Banshees but with rusty blades and Converse instead of fake eyelashes feel. There's a real nice balance between ethereal — led by the synthesizer and cello — and the deranged and garagey (albeit intergalactic garagey) that makes me think of both Servotron and Man or AstroMan, but they're definitely taking cues from a deep, dark, swirling well of their own. The result is the record I was hoping for the last time around. I can't seem to take this off my stereo. Flat-out fantastic. —Todd (Empty)

LOT SIX, THE: *Animals*: CD

Noisy stuff that sometimes veers into Barkmarket country, sometimes dips its toes in the Nirvana pool, and sometimes just gives it the ol' college try. I like and greatly appreciate the diversity of sounds. Ain't exactly my cup of tea, but I do respect 'em for bein' a little off the beaten path. —Jimmy Alvarado (Espo)

MACHINE GUN ELEPHANT, THEE: *Rodeo Tandem*

***Beat Specter*: CD**
Something about them Japanese. Like the Mad 3, these guys can take influences from three decades — the '50s, '60s, and '70s, put them in a time warp/blender, and come up with some super satisfying 2002 rock'n'roll. It's heavy on grooves and establishing a big atmosphere, but it doesn't sound overblown and dumbnutt because the chords and chops come from unexpected places, yet fit in perfectly, and the vocals don't sound like someone's nuts are in a vice. If you're looking for Link Wray meets Mott the Hoople meets the Controllers, all sung in Japanese, this is a good way to open the brain a little without missing out on the rock. It's also a pretty damn good to play for the parents because it's motivated and jumpy but there's no swearing (in English at least). —Todd (Alive/Bomp)

MAGNETIC IV: *Tarantula*: 7"

with glow-in-the-dark sleeve and fridge magnet
This caught me off guard in a good way. It's surfy (ala Ventures) female-fronted breathy-to-screaming garage punk (think somewhere between the Loudmouths and Sado Nation). I like the watery, warbley feel that the guitar gives it, teetering the songs like a mildewy shack on the edge of the ocean, about to crash onto the rocks below. But, overall, it didn't completely light my ears on fire. I think it's because the songs lock into grooves too soon and the band doesn't know if they should be brazen fire breathers (as the urgent vocals suggest) or new traditionalists (as the straight ahead reverb insists) and the overall impact lessens when parts of their songs repeat. To their credit, they hotfoot through a cover of The Sonics' "Strychnine," almost on par with The Cramps' take on the classic. Pretty cool, and I'll look forward to more releases, but this isn't essential. —Todd (Tear It Up)

MAN WILL DESTROY HIMSELF: *Consume... Be Silent... Die*: CDEP

Blender time. Get some aged whiskey, some later period Black Flag records, the first Corrosion of Conformity LP *Eye for an Eye*, and some old school East Coast records to top it off with some bile. Hit the "on" switch and let it roar. Had to throw in the COC reference since Reed plays drums in this band and does some vocal duties. His influences has to permeate this project. Also you can hear the love of Black Flag here. Seven songs to give you an alternative to the more rock stuff of COC that they have been putting out lately. —Donofthedeat (Man Will Destroy Himself)

MANDA AND THE MARBLES: *More Seduction*: CD

Some swell pop here, sick with hooks and overdriven guitars, the result sounding not unlike a ballsier Go-Go's. I'm not that big on pop anymore, but I actually enjoyed this a hell of a lot. —Jimmy Alvarado (Go Kart)

MATT SKIBA & KEVIN SECONDS: *Split*: CD

Matt Skiba (Alkaline Trio) and Kevin Seconds (7 Seconds) sitting in a tree. Playing and singing five songs each, acoustically. —Donofthedeat (Asian Man)

MEANS, THE:

***Gimme the Creeps, Steve*: 7"**
This record comes in a big fold-out silk-screened sleeve with some snakes and eagles and dogs and pictures of bandmembers and a female form with a snake coiled up in its uterus standing in front of an inverted five-pointed star with wings and the first song is that art-rock-meets-fake-blues stuff that it looks like we're gonna hafta sit thru for like the next two years whether anybody wants it or not, the second song is like samples and stuff, the third song is a little more c/w-damaged and the fourth song has washboards or something (that's apparently a big deal). The liner notes were so serious about the band's greatness that I was gripped with an all-consuming horror that I had been recently guilty of the same sin, causing me to dash off to the nearest Leg Hounds CD to see how big a fuck I came across as therein (verdict: big enough). Here's my favorite liner note bit: "The Means, to the best of my knowledge, are the only **RAZORCAKE** 83

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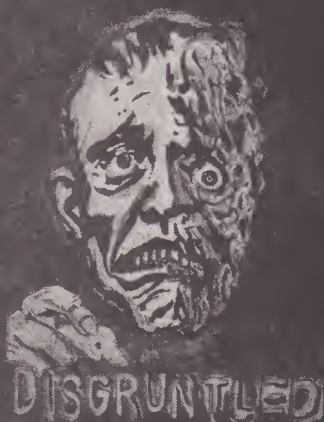
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band that can possibly 'save' rock. Or bury it." My favorite part is the "or bury it" part. Yeah. Rock is just **QUAKING** in its fucking boots right now. Don't buy any green bananas, Rock! **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Annex, (2)" ...i mean, **DUDE**, that is SOOO Dada and gnarly! **BEST SONG:** "Fitzpatrick" from what i can remember **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Hey, i **KNOW** someone named Steve! -Rev. Nørb (Roostercow)

MEXICAN BLACKBIRDS, THE: Ain't Got the Time: 7" EP
I spent an unduly large amount of time mentally censuring this band for sounding at least moderately Pagans-y, yet not being clueful enough to realize that the song title "Ain't Got the Time" was already taken by those selfsame Pagans; eventual double-checking showed that the Pagans song of similar nomenclature is actually called "HAVEN'T Got The time" and i regret the error (i also regret the fact that the other three songs on this record aren't covers of "Haven't Got the Time," "Got the Time" by Joe Jackson, and "When I Get the Time" by the Descendents, simply because that would be kinda funny) (we'll let the Chambers Brothers go unmentioned for now). Four songs from a five-piece, sounding like a cross between something the Chargers mighta done once (besides trading away the rights to Michael Vick) and some of the heavier, less-cartoony Rip Off bands of yore (i'm tempted to say the Stipjies, but i actually no longer remember what that band sounded like), with the occasional background blurt by the female drummer adding sort of a superficial Loli & The Chones garnish to things. Good but not superlative, as evidenced by the fact that i can't think of a decent joke to end with that doesn't involve invoking mental imagery of a Hispanic singing "Blackbird" by the Beatles. **BEST SONG TITLE:** "Blackout (With You)" **BEST SONG:** "Blackout (With You)" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Record label carries the message "PLAY LOUD." Hey, thanks for the tip, Slick. -Rev. Nørb (Mexican Blackbirds)

MINORITY BLUES BAND: Grab the Fire Swinging in the Rain: CD
With a name like "Minority Blues Band" and an album title like this, I probably would've passed on this album. But it's on Snuffy Smile and Snuffy Smile hasn't let me down yet. And, just like the name threw me for a loop, the sound is throwing me all around the room. It's a solid album and I can't stop listening to it, but I'm having a hell of a time classifying it. I can't think of any one band to compare them to, and any combination of bands that I could merge together seems nonsensical, like: Minority Blues Band sound like Snuff with Davey Tiltwheel on guitar covering the Clash's "Janie Jones". See. It's nonsense. Let's just say that they play fast and urgent and every member of the band is going nuts while keeping the song tight, and they'd be the perfect band to open up for a Dillinger Four tour of Japan. -Sean Carswell (Snuffy Smile)

MODERN MACHINES/ THE FRAGMENTS: Split CD
Being a life-long resident of the fine state of Minnesota, home of the Twins baseball team, I probably sprouted an intestinal polyp or two when I opened the jewel case of this split CD and laid eyes on the old Milwaukee Brewers logo. Visions of my state's own bin Laden, one Bud Selig, filled my mind. That cadaverous Mortimer Snerd fell just a few bad wig

hairs short of turning my beloved Twins into nothing more than a bunch of bobble-head dolls you buy on Ebay. Reviewing this would be tough. I could feel my journalistic objectivity bunching up on me like a pair of ill-fitting underpants. So I decided to venture into the belly of the beast, so to speak, and I went up into the northwoods of Wisconsin to listen to this CD and jot down my impressions, hoping to counterbalance any biases I might have regarding my neighboring state. Here's what I came up with: The Fragments sound like a blue-light special Social Distortion to me. Fast, energetic, solid. The Modern Machines come across as just another mealy-mouthed, anemic pop punk band that writes songs to gain brownie points with their period tantruming girlfriends. But here again my Minn. bias is coming back into play: Living in the home city of Dillinger Four - arguably the finest pop punk unit in this galaxy - I am spoiled on the intoxicating blend of poppy melodies and brick shit-house walls of guitar that D4 produces on such a consistent basis. I also have to toss in a few negative Reading Is Fundamental points on the Modern Machines side of the score card for crediting William Burroughs for the line "Nothing is true, Everything is permitted" when the actual author of that line is Hassan i Sabbah. I bet Jim Carroll knows that. Anyway, I give the Fragments a win by TKO. -Aphid Peewit (New Disorder)

MURRAY, CHRIS: Raw: CD
Now live from his living room, you get Chris and his acoustic guitar!
-Donofthedeat (Asian Man)

NEEDIES, THE: Screaming and Violence: CD
A more appropriate title would be *Bitching and Moaning: A Retrospective*. I hope he invested all his life savings in this album, goes completely broke, and has to eat the cat he's posing with on the inside cover. -Megan Pants (Slow Gun; <www.slowgunrecords.com>)

NEGATIVES, THE: Out in the Cold + New Fun b/w Fight: 7"
This starts with the god damn DUMBEST guitar solo i've ever heard in my life. Ever. At least on record. I played the beginning twenty seconds or so of side one like eight times in a row, just because i couldn't believe what i was hearing. The first three or four times, i played it just to confirm its amazing dumbness. The next three or four times, i played it just to try to understand WHAT DRIVES A MAN TO PLAY SUCH A GOD DAMN DUMB GUITAR SOLO??? The last time i played it, i pretended the guy really wanted it to sound like that. Then i kinda liked it! It's as if the guy is going for a whiz-bang Rikk Agnew "No Way" type rocking rocker of rock lead, and due to sheer accident/incompetence, he winds up sounding like a (very) poor man's Greg Ginn instead. It's actually kind of a beautiful thing, like a short school bus on a May morning perhaps. Anyway, the first song is called "Out in the Cold," which is about being out in the cold. Out of curiosity, i dialed 437-0123 immediately after hearing it, and, being as the operator told me it was 15 degrees Fahrenheit outside and these hipsters are from Sonoma, CA, i couldn't really get full tether on their pain. Moving on, i wrangled with the lyrical subtleties of "New Fun" ("I killed my bitch last night on some booze/punk rock criminal with nothing to lose") for quite some time, eventually coming to the conclusion that the song would be a fucking CLASSIC

except the guy said "bitch" too many times. I mean, if the chorus is gonna go "the bitch is dead, the bitch is dead, got new fun 'cause now she's dead," wouldn't the verses be better served using a synonym for "bitch" instead? (er, sorry about the three-syllable words) Sort of like that dopey line from — what was that Mentors song called, "Manhater" or something? — that went "all you lesbians, in your leather and your spikes/all you are — is lesbians and dykes!" I mean, really. **DON'T THINK THESE FINE POINTS OF ORDER DON'T MATTER!** The B-side, "Fight," starts with the line "I'll fight for my country," then seems to veer off into lyrics where the fighting seems to be for a girl, then ends with "let's get the boys and fight!," which confused me to no end: I couldn't figure out if the seeming-to-be-about-a-girl fighting lyrics were actually metaphorically about fighting for his country, or if the fighting-for-the-country lyrics were actually metaphorically about fighting for a girl, or the guy just wanted to provide a helpful overview of many popular applications of the fisticuffs medium, but I eventually got perturbed enough that I took it off before the song was done. I mean, shooting your girlfriend is one thing, but I certainly don't condone violence. **BEST SONG TITLE: "New Fun" BEST SONG: "New Fun" AMAZING FANTASTIC TRIVIA FACT:** This band is very negative! —Rev. Nørð (Noma Beach)

NEW CREATURES, THE: *Penelope Flowers*: CD

Apparently, this disc features the last recordings, done in the mid '80s and never before available, of a band of Rush t-shirt-wearing teens from Dayton, Ohio. And that's pretty much what it sounds like. Except that, even with the mouse-sized nuts Geddy Lee must have to get that elfin helium voice, Rush had, even at their most fanciful, more testicular might than these youngsters could ever dream of. I am all for desecrating the overblown sanctity of the label "punk" but I have no idea why anyone would ever call this punk. It sounds like the warmed-over haggis of '70s progressive rock to me. I don't know: was Uriah Heep punk? Regardless — I don't know if I've ever heard a less interesting, less exciting collection of meandering tunes in my life. Unicorn Rock blows. Old Skull remains the undisputed king of Kiddie Punk. —Aphid Peewit (Smog Veil)

NICOTINE: *Samurai Shot*: CD

Here is a band that would be a perfect fit on the roster of Fat. Big production, great music and they are from Japan! Since Fat hasn't put out anything by Hi-Standard in awhile, they would be a great signing. The music is a mixture of NOFX meets Bad Religion. A better example to those who might have heard of this band would be Sweden's Venerea. Infectiously catchy songs that are played to perfection in the melodic genre. You get twenty-five songs, which is a lot of songs from a band that doesn't play thrash, fastcore, or power violence. A really good band that deserves the Warped Tour more than most. —Donofthead (Asian Man)

NIGEL PEPPER COCK: *The New Way*: CD

If you can take your eyes off the sexy sexy artwork and get the damn disc in the player, you'll thrill to some supremely well-hewn — synth-grind-meets-'80s-metal, righteous hardcore and an all-points Crass pisstake. The whole thing is

pretty tongue-in-cheek and probably every song is a goof on something but I suspect some of the jokes are lost on me and I don't even care; it's good anyway. —Cuss Baxter (Life Is Abuse)

NO TREND: *Tritonian Nash-Vegas Polyester Complex*: CD

Man, some really good reissues are coming down the pike lately. This is a reissue of No Trend's second album, and it's still a doozy. Another one of those bands that defy categorization, these guys fell along the same lines as Tragic Mulatto, Scratch Acid and early Butthole Surfers, meaning that a wide variety of musical cues are tapped and then destroyed with drugtinged wild abandon. The added horn section on this album adds class to the ensuing chaos. If you like your punk completely off the wall and sure to leave you guessing from one moment to the next, you'd be a fool not to snatch this up. Play it often and play it loud. —Jimmy Alvarado (Touch and Go)

PAVERS: *Return to the Island of No Return*: CD

This schizoid little disc flip flops between these tasty bits that sound like a metal-fortified Hank Rollins-era Black Flag and these excruciating sections filled with ghastrly swirling syrupy vocal harmonies that go on and on and makes me think of squirming in the dentist chair while having my teeth drilled into without any Novocain. But it all kind of made sense when I read the liner notes and saw that some guitar work was donated by one Gregg Ginn, whose musical tastes got moldy in the back of the fridge sometime back in the early '80s. This actually gets worse the more I listen to it. —Aphid Peewit (Boss Tuneage)

PEGGIO PUNX: *Discography: 2x CD*

One of Italy's finest gets the discography treatment. Disc one gives you all their recorded output and the second disc is chock full of live recordings. Right there in time with Raw Power and Cheetah Chrome Motherfuckers, these guys established themselves in the Italian punk scene circa early '80s. Upon hearing international bands during that time, you knew you were hearing something raw and special. The recordings are raw and could be have easily been recorded on a boombox. The drums always have that bongo drum sound. The production always has a muffled effect to it. The same applies to these recordings, but one thing that stands out is the uniqueness of the songs. The energy is genuine and it's music that is distinctive to its time and place. A history lesson for those who seek it. Back in the day, this would be hard to get here in the states. Luckily, someone was smart to repress this to give it life one more time. No need to keep the music isolated to the people who can afford Ebay prices. —Donofthead (SOA)

PETER & THE TEST TUBE *BABIES: Schwein Lake Live*: CD

A reissue of the band's second live album, recorded in Munich on their 1995 tour for the *Supermodels* album. Lotsa classic tracks here done all nice and purty and the band sounds great. Of note are particularly good versions of "Blown Out Again" and "Spirit of Keith Moon." —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

PIEDMONT CHARISMA: *Piedmont Charisma*: CD

Sweet merciful Christ. Here's the recipe: combine equal parts The Faint with

annoying synth-poppers from the early 1980s — clone The Thompson Twins and Soft Cell to make sure the mix is right — then blend until smooth. Drink. Approximately fifteen minutes later, you will feel a pressure in your bowels and after rushing to the toilet to relieve yourself, you will find this record floating in the bowl. Do yourself a favor and flush without retrieving it. —Puckett (Slave)

PIRANHAS: *Erotic Grit Movies*: CD

GodDAMN, is this one glorious mess. Imagine the Flesh Eaters having being served a serious beat-down by the unholy tag team of a coked-out Pere Ubu and meth-addled Stooges and you ain't even close. This is music to get ugly by, music that will encourage you to tear shit up and go hog wild, music that prolonged listening to might actually result in a lengthy prison stay. Don't believe me? Just give a listen to "Isolation" and tell me you don't feel like kicking the neighbor's annoying fucking cat for a 75-yard field goal. —Jimmy Alvarado (In the Red)

PLAIN WHITE T'S: *Stop*: CD

Another band putting an apostrophe where it doesn't belong. But I could forgive that if this wasn't such unabashed Bon Jovi weenie rock. I realize that Wattie from the Exploited was a grade A chucklefuck from day one and he has actually managed to become even more of a dim-witted mean cartoon character with each passing year, but after listening to the Plain White T's I want to lock myself in the basement, roll around in the litter box and crank nothing but Exploited discs for an entire week. Oh how I long for ugly naked rock covered with warts and zits and boils and carbuncles and un-wiped butt cracks. Calling this dreck "radio-friendly" is an understatement: this disc wants to tear its clothes off, jump on top of your radio, and hump the daylights out of it. Yuck. —Aphid Peewit (Fearless)

RADIO VAGO: *Black & White Photo Enterprise*: CD EP

With two singles available on independent labels and a long out-of-print D.I.Y. recording, *Black & White* stands as Radio Vago's first CD release for national consumption. The five songs included are re-mixed and re-mastered from the band's self-released, self-titled CD. The guitar volume, vocals, and over-all sound quality is a definite improvement. With a sound that is difficult to categorize, Radio Vago's music seems to reflect a bevy of diverse influences such as Patti Smith, Iggy, Joy Division, Gang Of Four and the Screamers without ever sounding recycled. The CD's stand out track is a song about enforced gender rolls entitled "My New Suit" — a fast paced number on which every member's contribution shines, from the loopy keyboard intro, to the winding chorus that builds, to singer Adrienne Pearson's impassioned cry "Every Sunday, my mommy tries to help me and she makes me put on my stupid dress." This EP is a worthy prelude of greater things to come. —Bob Cantu (Buddyhead)

RAMBO/ CRUCIAL UNIT: *Split: 7"*

Rambo: First track is a East Coast moosh fest that keeps the pit moving. The second and third tracks blasts off like a laser guided missile aimed at a strategic target, ready for destruction. Crucial Unit: More manic and intense than Rambo. The vocals are screamo and the beats fly by at

lightning speed. You feel like you have to hold on for dear life. They definitely win the speed contest here. Both bands hail from Philadelphia. The theme of the split is bicycles. This was a great introduction to both of these bands for me. —Donofthead (Ed Walters)

RAMONES: *Leave Home*: CD

The second Ramones LP re-release from Rhino, including the original track #5 cut, "Carbana Not Glue" that was recalled off the shelves in 1977 due to trademark infringements. Now it's back, remastered, and blissfully louder than ever, with bonus cuts "Babysitter" (which was used to replace the re-called "Carbana" in the U.K.) and a sixteen-song set of vintage Ramones blowing minds on 8/12/76 at the Roxy in Hollywood. The booklet, like the rest of these, is an interesting introspective on the history of *Leave Home*, complete with pics. Give that worn-out vinyl version some rest and test the limits of your CD player with this one. Your disc player will thank you for it. —Designated Dale (Rhino)

RAMONES: *Rocket to Russia*: CD

Rhino did a fine-ass job on this re-issue of the Ramones third LP — not only on the music itself, but recreating the inner sleeve of the original LP in the booklet here with all the cool John Holmstrom (one of the co-founders of the original *Punk* zine of NYC) artwork. Bonus tracks here include the U.K. 7" b-side version of "It's a Long Way Back to Germany," which was later recorded with new drummer Marky on the *Road to Ruin* LP, as well as an early version of "Needles & Pins." Single versions of "I Don't Care" and "Sheena is a Punk Rocker" are here, too, as well as the demo, "Slug," which appeared earlier on the *All The Stuff & More* re-issues. Excellent job here. Need I tell you how much you want this? I thought not. —Designated Dale (Rhino)

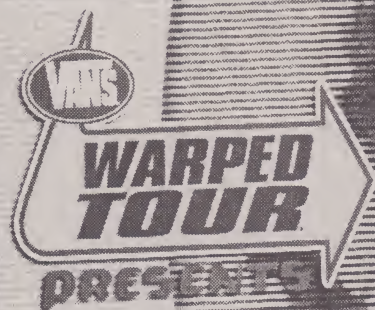
RAMONES: *Road to Ruin*: CD

This is the Ramones' fourth LP in Rhino's series of re-introducing America's band to a new generation, as well as making old fans smile even more. This shine, shine, SHINES. Yeah, fuck, I know — this is the LP that includes "I Wanna Be Sedated." But it's also the LP that houses "Go Mental," "Bad Brain," "I Don't Want You," "She's the One," "I Just Want to Have Something to Do," and possibly one of the most perfect Ramones songs ever laid down on a studio reel, "I'm Against It." This is also the LP that showed the world that the Ramones were capable of handling ballad-type-crooners, like the near-perfect "Questioningly" and their cover of "Needles & Pins." Bonus cuts here include producer Ed Stasium-recorded versions of "I Want You Around" and "Rock 'N Roll High School." The live five-song medley from the film, "Rock 'N Roll High School" is here, too, as well as an unreleased demo, "Come Back, She Cried A.K.A. I Walk Out" and the demo, "Yea, Yea" from the *All The Stuff & More Volume 2* reissue. God DAMN, I love this record. Share the love, people, share the love. —Designated Dale (Rhino)

RAMONES: *End of the Century*: CD

This is Rhino's re-issue of the terribly underrated fifth Ramones LP, originally brought unto fans from

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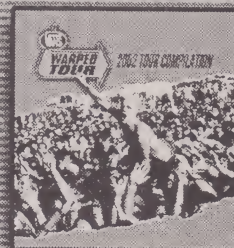
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Phil Spector back in 1979. I defy anyone to listen to "This Ain't Havana," "All The Way," "I Can't Make It On Time," or "Let's Go" and not feel the need to pogo. This is also the LP that brought such live-set staples like "Do You Remember Rock 'N' Roll Radio?" as well as "Rock 'N' Roll High School" and "Chinese Rock." The bonus cuts here are really happenin' with demo versions of certain "Century" cuts, especially the bitchin' version of "Danny Says." Also included is the unreleased "Please Don't Leave" demo and the soundtrack version of "Rock 'N' Roll High School." Like crack, this record was always quite addictive, and now with this re-ish, I'm really hooked, and if you ain't, that makes you a crack hooker. So there. —Designated Dale (Rhino)

RAMONES:

Pleasant Dreams: CD

The sixth Ramones LP, gloriously re-issued with an assload of demos to boot. Demo cuts include a 1981 version of "Touring" which was re-recorded for the 1992 LP, *Mondo Bizarro* and an alternate version of the *Get Crazy* soundtrack cut, "Chop Suey." There's the demo version of "I Can't Get You Outta My Mind," which was re-recorded for the 1989 *Brain Drain* LP later on. And then there's the unreleased cuts: "Kicks to Try," "Sleeping Troubles," "Stares in This Town," and "I'm Not An answer." The disc tray even has the original LP cover artwork that was to be for the album. This is yet another classic Ramones slab that was easily overlooked. Just listen to "All's Quiet on the Eastern Front," "You Didn't Mean Anything to Me," or "She's a Sensation," not to mention "We Want the Airwaves" and "The KKK Took My Baby Away." I'll bet dollars to Homer Simpson's donuts that the blood'll start pulsing rapidly through that jaded heart of yours. Play loud! —Designated Dale (Rhino)

RAMONES: Self-titled: CD

I'm actually surprised that no one here at the 'Cake didn't take a second or two to review any of the Ramones re-issues that Rhino put out. Since the last eighteen months or so, Rhino has re-packaged the first eight LPs of Ramones studio fury, and I've felt like Howard Stern at a girly-girl lesbian convention ever since. The first four CDs hit the shelves in 2001 and the next four discs in 2002. Being the unconditional fan of the brothers Ramone, I'm gonna take some time here to tell all you sacrilegious simps who haven't picked this up yet (or any of the others) just what you're missing out on. Besides all fourteen songs of the original LP re-mastered and roaring out of the stereo, you get early demos of some of this LP's cuts and a couple unreleased tracks that were on the *All The Stuff & More Volume One* re-issue. Also included is an early demo of "You Should Never Have Opened That Door," later on their second release, *Leave Home*, and the 7" version of "Blitzkrieg Bop," which has a wonderful live essence to Joey's vocal track. The booklet with the disc, as with all the booklets included with these Ramones re-issues, contain pics, history of the album's creation, and complete lyrics. In this particular booklet, there are some pics that make it amazing to believe that the same Ramones' debut that hit the world some twenty-seven years ago is still wowing new fans today. Fuckin'-A, it does. Rhino even took the paper tracking labels from the original vinyl records and

screened them right onto all these re-issue CDs themselves. Too fucking cool. If this record isn't already in the "R" section of your vinyl collection, Rhino is giving you a second lease on life to get one of the best reasons to listen to one of the best things to happen to rock'n'roll. —Designated Dale (Rhino)

RAMONES:

Subterranean Jungle: CD

It's so fucking cool to see Rhino re-issue this, 'cause when the Ramones originally released *Jungle* back in 1983, it ended up being their lowest-selling LP to date, thus making it a bit collectible being that there were not a whole lot of copies to be re-pressed. Anyone who discounts this record is up to their tonsils in their own shit, 'cause *Jungle* still holds its own to this day with Dee Dee's "Time Bomb," "Highest Trails Above," "In the Park," "Outsider," and his collaboration with Johnny, "Psycho Therapy." It's no one's fault but the listeners that this LP isn't considered one of their "favorites." I personally love each and every Ramones slab differently — but always unconditionally — because they consistently put out great albums. No, don't argue — it's not an opinion. It's a fact. Fuck you very much. The bonus cuts here on *Jungle*, by far, are some of the most rockin' unreleased demos included with these Ramones re-issues, especially "Bumming Along," which could have easily been put on the original *Jungle* release. That song's pure, unhampered, locomotive-driven Ramones power, I'm telling ya. Other unreleased tracks are "New Girl in Town," "No One to Blame," "Roots of Hatred," and "Unhappy Girl." There's also the original mix of "Indian Giver" and an acoustic version of the *Jungle* cut, "My-My Kind of Girl." If you don't own this already, Rhino's definitely throwing you a bone, so go grab it, or you can massage my bone, fucko. —Designated Dale (Rhino)

RAMONES:

Too Tough to Die: CD

With this eighth studio release, the Ramones came back to plant their flag in the asses of lame imitators, showing that they've always had a hard edge, and this LP has more than declared that to be true. With the Rhino re-issue of *Too Tough*, you don't only get this reclamation of the Ramones roots, but a whole lotta bonus offerings like demo versions of a bunch of the LP's cuts. Also included here are the Dee Dee vocal versions of "Planet Earth 1988," "Danger Zone," and "Too Tough to Die," which will want to make you start a pit on the freeway with your vehicle. And let me just add that the Dee Dee vocal versions add a new dimension to these songs, not that Joey wasn't fucking key to begin with, 'cause he always was. Some U.K. b-side singles "Smash You" and the Stones cover of "Street Fighting Man" are here, too, as well as the unreleased "Out of Here" and "I'm Not an Answer." Every time I throw *Too Tough* on the stereo it reminds me how the Ramones kicked off their live shows with "Durango 95" from this LP. Magic. Absolute fucking magic. —Designated Dale (Rhino)

REACT/SPAZM 151: Split LP

React: Situated midway between Harum Scaram and Discharge, you get the "we're all fucked, let's write songs about it" school, with bass-heavy drumming and tag teaming female-male voices. It gets antsy and crusty, growly, and remains fast, but the drums and guitars

could have easily been taken directly from ten other albums I currently own and, frankly, don't listen to much any more. It made me really want to listen to Motorhead while their music had me thinking of a serious movie, like *All's Quiet on the Western Front*, acted out with Muppets. I wasn't quite feeling it how they intended. Spazm 151: Hardcore's a tough gig nowadays. It's a genre that's treated like it's over and done with, not only by the media, but 80% of the bands that play it reflexively. I hear too many bands play straight-up Minor Threat of Youth of Today ripoffs, tooling those songs with as much verve as reciting the Gettysburg Address verbatim for a disinterested class. Spazm 151, although not reinventing the wheel, sound like they mean what they play and don't come across like a Civil War reenactment battle done for benefit of tourists. Mean, angry, good stuff. —Todd (13th Floor)

REDEMPTION 87:

All Guns Poolside: CD

Man, I built up so much hate for everything that developed from the original New England youth crew scene I forgot how fucking good Youth of Today and some of the others were. Taking YOT and the Cro Mags as starting points and then not going anywhere else (except to the Bad Brains and Negative Approach for covers), R87 tears down the walls with the best NYHC I've heard in many years and so what if it's retro? I'm already tired of the bandana refestival, so I'll chew on this until someone starts a revival of the classic work of Kilslug. —Cuss Baxter (Blackout!)

REV NØRB: *Earth's Greatest Rocker!: CD*

Where the hell do I start? Am I being set up here? Is this some kind of hazing stunt, just cuz I'm the dopey new guy here? Rev. Nørb's a fellow Razorcaker, for crissakes, not to mention a punk rock icon of the loftiest cosmic heft. How does one even begin to approach *Earth's Greatest Rocker?* Well, first let me state: I consider the Good Reverend to be a national treasure, at very least on par with the hotly controversial Garrison Keillor. Nørb's tenure at *MRR* alone should garner him some sort of punk purple heart. He was, perhaps along with George Tabb and Mykel Bumm, the lone organ of humor at that mummified institution for years. But I'll be honest: I've always worried that Nørb might turn himself into the Soupy Sales or Tom Green of punk rock. Severe times demand rash acts of buffoonery, God knows. But Nørb is too valuable to deserve to be painted into a corner where he's trapped slapping himself in the face with lemon meringue pies over and over again for the rest of his days. I mean, how many punk icons turned themselves into cartoons? It's a staggering list with names like Sid Vicious, Darby Crash, El Duce — and the Bluto of punk, GG Allin — floating lifelessly around at the top. The Ramones were 100% cartoon characters from the hey-ho-get-go. But maybe being a cartoon character is the noblest way out. Fuck. What do I know? I'm a jug-headed retard of such breath-taking insignificance that I'm not worthy of scrubbing Nørb's soiled clown noses. But the more I listen to this CD, the more I realize that my fears are unfounded — if only for the simple fact that Nørb isn't just slapstick and prat falls and funny outfits — there is a deucedly clever intellect at work here. The song "My Drums

Are Cooler Than Shit" alone whisked away any doubts I might've have. Nørb is sorta like a hyperactive Joey Ramone, if Joey had a brain bigger than a whoopee cushion and tackled lyrics having to do with theology, Einsteinian physics and the under appreciated value of male ejaculant. Yes, in the pantheon of Earth's goofball demigods, Rev. Nørb's place is secure. I'm just glad I got through this review without using the words "wacky" and "zany." Oops — Aphid Peewit (Bulge)

RIMLORD: *Lord of the Rim: CD*

The fact that I found myself completely engrossed in reading the news that Lisa Marie Presley and Nicholas Cage are divorcing and totally ignoring the music coming outta my speakers while this was on does not say much about this release that can be construed as positive. —Jimmy Alvarado (No address)

RIVETHEAD:

City Sounds Number Five: 7"

At first, Rivethead sounds like a band that plays pop punk along the same lines as mid-nineties Lookout Records bands. The singer has the raw, smoked-too-many-cigarettes voice that's not unlike Ben Weasel's, and the melodies aren't too far away from Green Day. I listened to this once, and figured that I wouldn't listen to it any more. Something compelled me to give it another chance, and the second time I heard these songs, I started singing along. Not to the lyrics. Just mumbling similar sounds without noticing that I was doing it. Then, I started listening to this on a daily basis. I can't say why. There's just something more to this. It's too rough to be generic pop punk. It's too honest to be generic anything. On repeated listens, a more complex array of influences start showing their faces. I hear bits of The Strike here, a taste of the Arrivals there, and an aspiration of Dillinger Four hanging in the air over it all. It's good stuff. —Sean Carswell (Tracks House)

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT: *Live from Camp X-Ray: LP*

When *Circa Now!* sunk into my cranium last decade, perhaps it coincided with me buying a shotgun and finding a dishwasher on the side of the street to shoot mere hours later and perhaps whiskey is a dandy sponge to soak memories in, but that was a fuckin' album. Heat, heart, rock'n'roll, throb, soul. It focused what *Paint As a Fragrance* hinted at and made a smart bomb laser beam to the happy spots in my brain. That melding of Tanner, the Saints, and Lou Rawls with dips into pot-happy psychedelia that didn't blow, but had a horn. Yeah. Successive Rocket records — from *All Systems Go!* through *Cut Carefully* and *Play Loud* — definitely had choice cuts — but lacked that all-important end-to-end playability for me. I listened with half an ear, always impatient for certain songs. None of those LPs roared out of my car's open door as we shot the fuck out of whatever unlucky appliance was left out on any curb in a ten mile radius. Live from *Camp X-Ray*'s a fuckin' ball stomp by well-seasoned players not fucking around with anything except playing their hearts out. Fat's trimmed. Art for art's sake is left on the out-takes reel. Veteran power. Lifer credibility. Newcomer energy. Wonderfully actualized songs. Thick swagger, shithappy-horny sound, boogie you can sweat to, just by listening along. These hard-working mofos are kinda like

James Brown without the wife beatings and drive-by shootings ordered by God. Highly recommended. —Todd (Swami)

ROCKING HORSE WINNER, THE: *Horizon*: CD

If I ever had any punk rock cred, I'm pretty sure that admitting that I love this record and that it's about the only thing I've listened to (besides Roxy Music) in the last week would eliminate it. So be it. I don't care if Jolie Lindholm sang on a Dashboard Confessional record (as a huge black sticker on the cover art proclaims — one of the worst marketing moves I've seen in music), although that seems to be a major selling point for this release. All I care about is that this album sounds like four 1991/1992-era shoegazers (cf. Revolver) ditched classes at Oxford long enough to write ten songs about loss, longing and heartache. Lindholm's vocals swoop and soar over the lilting guitar riffs like drunken songbirds scattering before a storm and looking for a place to wait out the rain. And really, the songs are quite beautiful, perfect for comp tapes that fourteen-year-old boys make to give to girls who don't know they exist. Heads up guys — this will get her attention. —Puckett (Equal Vision)

ROTTERS, THE: *Wrench to the Nuts*: CD

Sweet holy fuggin' Christ, someone help me pick my brains up off the floor.... This, my fine-feathered friends, is why you should never, EVER count out the old farts. 'cause just when you least expect it, they come up from behind your smug ass and whop you upside your flat noggin' with a Mack truck. Mostly new, all-of-'em-glorious tracks from these scene vets, and also the first release by an active lineup in at least two decades. All

venom, bile and virulence belched forth, blowing all the cobwebs offa this Trojan horse and sending it out into the midst of the misguided hardcore hordes to help 'em see the light and learn 'em what punk rock SHOULD be, namely something that would get any kid grounded for ten years just for owning a copy. My god, who'd a-thunk these guys were capable of such a monster? Sure, those singles were swell, and that "Pull It and Yell" disc wasn't too shabby, but good lord, this is soooooo beyond merely upping the ante. We're talking pure sonic bombast here, a metaphorical BAM BAM BAM BAM to the cranium, a reason to trash your bedroom for no reason, a reason to slap your little sister silly just for bein' alive. If you have any sense left in that puny little brain of yours, you'll rush out, make a copy of this your own, proudly display it someplace visible and take your lumps when your parents find out you wasted your lunch money on such "filth." Recommend it? Hell, I'd buy each of you a copy if I had enough money. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dionysus)

RUNNAMUCKS: *On the Brink*: CD

I have a headache and it has gotten worse. I needed something soothing and calm to listen to. What I got was a blast of music that was a thrash cocktail of early Gang Green meets the Neos and with the sucker punch of Black Flag. The drums are played so fast that they almost blur out of attention. Tempos change from manic speeds to drop-on-a-dime stops to mid tempo jams. The guitar buzzes with a nasty energy that makes me imagine that they might be bleeding from all the friction off the strings. Vocals are screamed the old fashioned way. True musicianship shows by their

ability to write songs that are fast and interesting. Some bands in this genre tend to be repetitive and generic. This band seems to have taken great stakes to write songs that are not overly focused on the thrash aspect but the power of the song. But the thrash they do play. They can hold their own against anyone. I have been taken back in time to the early '80s. So much torture with so much enjoyable pain. Listening to new music was a bad idea. I'm going to go get a beer and some aspirin to calm down from this experience. —Donofthedeat (Runnamucks)

SAMUS: *Desengano*: CD

This is either a joke or a mistake, 'cause what is on this disc is Hawaiian wedding music. My computer identifies it as being a compilation called "A Place Called Hawaii." Pop it out, looks like it should've been anything but a Hawaiian record. Fuck, it ain't even cool Hawaiian music. Just some lame crap white people in ugly shorts would probably buy in a souvenir shop so that they can relive the moments when the photos come back from the developer. Ugh. (Jimmy, the label emailed me. Yeah, it was a fuckup at the pressing plant and I was supposed to tell you, but I thought it'd be funny if you liked it. I'm an asshole like that. —Todd) —Jimmy Alvarado (Crucial Blast)

SAVAGE REPUBLIC: *Box Set: 4X CD*

Back when the battle lines were still just being drawn between different factions of punk rock and the ridiculous level of pigeonholing prevalent today was still in its infancy stages, some bands were hell-bent on not fitting into any one mold. Savage Republic was one such band, one that created an unholy mélange of hardcore, industrial noise, proto-goth death

rock, surf and Middle Eastern drone and somehow made it work. Over the course of nearly a decade, they played a slew of shows and released four studio albums, a couple of live albums, a few EPs and a handful of singles before calling it quits in 1989. Collected here are the bulk of their studio recordings, including the *Tragic Figures*, *Ceremonial*, *Jamahiriya*, and *Customs* albums, the *Trudge* EP and assorted singles and compilation tracks, all of which have been damn hard to find for quite a while now, and now all packaged in individual, full-color letterpressed envelopes not unlike the covers the original releases came in. Although, in hindsight, some comparisons can be made to some of their contemporaries like the Swans and early Sonic Youth, the band's sound is still as singular, revolutionary and wholly difficult to classify as when they were still a consistently active band. If you like your punk a little more adventurous than the next guy, you would be hard pressed to find more satisfying tuneage, 'cause not only is this stuff all over the map, it's consistently good, a rare feat for any band. If you like your punk to sound just like Social Distortion, Blink 182 or whatever spiky-headed boy band is hot this week, you're in the wrong scene, my friend. Might I suggest heavy metal? They LOVE conformity over in that camp. —Jimmy Alvarado (<www.mobilization.com>)

SCARDEY CAT/APATHETIC YOUTH: *This Is LA, Not the South Bay*: Split 7"

I'm fearful yet attracted to Scaredy Cat because I get the feeling they've got a good sense of humor, like Spazz did, but I'm not a hundred percent sure where it ends. The first song, "Flag Football," melts Iron Maiden with Charles

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Bronson: rippin' metal licks and the vocalist shows no fear of slipping into falsettos. But the other four tracks are straight anvils-to-the-nads, three-hooks-in-three-seconds thrash that are seamless and sound angry but have titles like "Don't Stub Your Toe on the Little Guy." Good stuff. Apathetic Youth are straight-ahead angry, have clean vaginas in their thank you list, and have full comprehension of pile-driving thrash villains like Los Crudos, Neos, and Vitamin X. No fault in that. —Todd (No Label)

SEED: (If I Can Catch a) Baby Rainbow: 7" EP

...on first blush, the title track appeared to be virtually musically identical to "Here Comes a Regular," the essentially-acoustic ballad that ends the Replacements *Tim* album, but, with the onset of the ill-pitched vocals, I realized I was errantly playing the record on the wrong speed — which isn't the punch line, the punch line is that I was actually playing it TOO FAST. To keep the ghost of Tim Yohannan off my ass, I will refrain from further coverage of the song in question; I mean, this is the sort of thing that makes Oasis sound like they're hung like John Holmes. The handwritten letter which accompanied this record on its transatlantic zig-zag from England to my turntable conceded that the title track is "a bit mellow," but that the EP had a "double A" side (oh, well, in THAT case I guess everything's all right!), and that if i/we played "Ammonia," i/we would "see" where they were "coming from." So, I dunno. I guess they come from Ammonia, England. All I heard of note in "Ammonia" was a DK-style bass riff (the English have some peculiar obsession with the Dead Kennedys, apparently America's Only Punk Band, Ever) played a la grunge, so, by and large, I'd give the A-side an F and the AA-side a C-minus or something; what's completely unexpected though is that what I guess would be the BB-side (Side 2, Song 2) — "Here It Comes" — rates a solid B, kind of like a dirtier-sounding Flop minus the pop genius bits, and the B-side (which is actually on the A-side — don't look at me, I didn't tell them to drive on that side of the road), "Girlfriend," is actually an A-minus! It's some kinda benign collision involving Brit-pop, Alt-rock, and Punk-Pop that actually makes one muse on whether or not this band is stockpiled with a vast array of Songs That Don't Suck and just stuck crap on their alleged "A" and "AA" sides because they were confused about their sexuality, or if the band actually DOES suck, and just got lucky with the "B" and "BB" sides. I played "Girlfriend" four or five times in a row and came up with no definite answers, not even whether or not the record's dirty-ish sound was a result of punk disdain for fidelity or merely the shortcomings of the 7" 33 format... but with a name like "Seed," one might be well advised to err on the side of caution. **WORST SONG TITLE:** "(If I Can Catch A) Baby Rainbow" **BEST SONG:** "Girlfriend" **FANTASTIC AMAZING TRIVIA FACT:** Letter enclosed with record proudly states "Limited edition — 200 violet vinyl. That's HEAVY violet vinyl!" The scale at the post office says the vinyl alone does, in fact, weigh a full three ounces — that's more than twice as heavy as most leading brands! —Rev. Nørð (Rabbit In The Rain)

SHARP EASE, THE: T-Spin: 7"

The title track reminds me of *Psychocandy*-era Jesus and Mary Chain,

except fronted by some ladies: more fuzz than a shaggy mohair sweater, sexy drippings of vocals, restrained keyboard, inviting guitar. "Lick My Ass" has the keeper of a line, "If you're going to gonna lick my pussy, you're gonna lick my ass." Then the word "lick" is repeated a bunch. It almost sounds like a nasty, finger-jamming Bjork. Not a bad world to live in. "Rock 'n' Roll Detox" pulls the erotic dancing pole of the Pixies between their legs and starts swinging around. Occasional high squeaks, down to breathy Kim Deal interludes, dappled with smooth, heated guitar bursts. Not a bad (debut?) at all. —Todd (Soft Spot; <www.softspotrecords.com>)

SLOPPY SECONDS: Destroyed: CD

I already owned this album on cassette a few years ago, and it was starting to get warped from being played so many times. Naturally, when I saw it had been re-released on CD, I had to snatch it up. The sound is clearer and better, but still tight, still very much Sloppy. These guys were writing joke songs and funny lyrics long before bands like the Vandals and Guttermouth, but their songs aren't just silly. They have good melodies, and they're fun to sing along with. After listening to the album the first time, you might think that Sloppy Seconds sound like other bands (the Vindictives, for instance), and then you have to realize that Sloppy Seconds came out with these songs long before those other bands. For those of you who missed *Destroyed* the first time around, pick up a copy of the re-release. It's just as good today as it was back in the days of the audiocassette. —Felizon (Coldfront)

SMALLTOWN: Fall into Line: 7"

Some bands have it. Most don't. It. You know, that spark that wakes the monster. That chord that ignites a roar. That phrase that makes you go "shit yeah" and you find yourself yelling happily at your record player for being so good to you today. You dance a little retarded dance. Smalltown's somehow nailed the bright, jangly, slashy guitars of frantic Jam and hooked into a fresh keg tapped with foaming modern oi. (Let the liquid layer and get real pretty in a glass as the bubbles settle, with flashes of the Swingin' Utters when they strut through cool flourishes and grinning mid-pace punk steadiness on top of songs reminiscent of the Dropkick Murphys pride-swelling bar thumpings {before they resorted to songs about fucking fat girls}.) I don't quite get how bands like Smalltown can approach a form of music that's been a dead end for so many before them (admit it, the last couple of Stiff Little Fingers records were such huge stinking logs, they wouldn't even flush), and make it all fierce and bouncy again, like it'd just been born. A trio of Swedes pulled it off. This is excellent. —Todd (Bridge)

SOLO DOS EN TIJUANA:

El Mango y la Luna Caribe: CD Tom Waits and Manu Chao meet up at a Nico concert and decide to make an album together. —Jimmy Alvarado (<alvarezj@slickerhat.com>)

SOUTH RAY BESSIE: Self-titled CD

On the CD there's the same picture — a giant octopus attacking a ship — that was on the cover, but in sepia tones. I liked that. The music itself was pop punk that didn't stand out in any way. I didn't like that. —Megan Pants (Code Seven)

SPITS, THE: Self-titled: CD

The boys from Washington return to give the kids more thick-skulled thud punk with just a smidge of keyboards. As can be expected, the resulting tuneage provided here is top notch, mandatory listening for anyone with even a passing interest in punk rock. —Jimmy Alvarado (Slovenly)

SPITTING TEETH:

Don't Believe the Hype: 7"

I don't listen to a lot of straight-ahead hardcore anymore. Sometimes it seems like there's only so much that you can do within the parameters of a minute-long song. You can only be so fast and so divergent when you're stuffing eight songs into a seven-inch. But bands still come along and add new wrinkles to hardcore, and when they nail it, it's fucking cool. Spitting Teeth is one of those bands. They find ways to let a little air breath into a fast-as-hell song and throw cool bass lines or drum fills into the wall of noise. They're like DS-13 in that way. And, like Negative Approach, they do have a lot of power and anger without being overwhelming. Most importantly, even though they stick within the parameters of minute/minute-and-a-half long songs and they do have an eight-song seven-inch here, they also find something new within those parameters. —Sean Carswell (Havoc)

STEREOTYPERIDER:

Same Chords, Same Songs.

Same Six Strings: CD

I'm in a state of personal disagreement. The music presented before me is a unique blend of melody, interesting chord progressions, and inter-personal lyrics. What I don't feel is the energy. I

can't define the non-interest besides that. Oh well... —Donofthead (Suburban Home)

STEVE VON TILL: If I Should Fall to the Field: CD

Don't think even the most stalwart of twerkers would be able to make it through this album without nodding off. Painfully mellow in all the wrong ways. —Jimmy Alvarado (Neurot)

STILLWELL: Don't Face a Problem... Burn It: CD

I thought it was the band from *Almost Famous*, but it's the band from "Almost AmRep 1990" doing a disjointed-music-and-lyrics, Chicago thing that's interesting for the short period between when it starts and when it becomes clear there's just too much of it (so much, in fact, that many of the measures have five beats instead of four. Humans have two legs and so can't dance properly in 5/4 time). —Cuss Baxter (Hewhocorrupts, Inc.)

STITCHES, THE:

Twelve Imaginary Inches: CD

The Stitches had me 50-50 until I saw them several years back at a Shakedown. They bruised, shouted, and crept through a beer-glass-to-the-head set in Vegas. The crowd was rabid, seething for more. The Stitches' set time was up, but they didn't stop playing. Lohrman's mic was cut. Without vocals, he picked up a little red plastic cup and shouted through it like an itty bitty megaphone as the band ripped through another. The crowd sang along so loudly and shot so much energy back at the band that during the last chorus, the mic was flicked back on and — while not necessarily a love fest — it was a real rock'n'roll moment where

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the audience became the fifth member of the band. Everything was blasted in temporary alcoholic bliss. In the years following, The Stitches have alternately impressed and bored the fuck out of me live, depending if they're fighting one another, depending if they can stand up. Coke variables, emotional stability, that sort of thing. This album is as close to the perfect live set the Stitches are capable of, then laying it to tape and making sure the drummer keeps time. It's just short of having Johnny kicking you straight in the chest if you're standing too close. My favorite full length release by them. Check the little box by name. I'm a believer. —Todd (TKO)

STOOL SAMPLE/THE SCHITZ: *Baptism in Jism: Split 7"*

Stool Sample is pretty much a crusty metal punk band that sings about the most offensive things they can. They are local and I must say that I enjoy going to see their show when they play. The three songs on here, though, aren't anything to shake a stick at. Pretty straightforward without their usual gross out novelty. Being a big fan of toilet humor, I was disappointed. Then there are The Schitz. They are a good version of Stool Sample that doesn't need the bathroom motif to put out good music. They are musically what I wish Stool Sample was. Fast, slightly metal, snotty punk. They also have three songs, which makes this 7" a thrifty deal. —Toby Tober (Stool Sample/The Schitz)

SUPERCARGER: *Singles Party 1992-1993: CD*

This is six Supercarger 7"s conveniently packaged together. Anyone who's tried to get any of the single releases knows how impossible (or expensive) it

is, so this was my first time hearing a some of the stuff on here. Funny fact about this is that the masters were long gone by the time they put this together, so Greg Lowery taped them directly from his record player. My favorite Supercarger song, "Don't Mess Me Up," is here, along with songs they apparently weren't all that happy with in retrospect — the Rezillos cover. A great album to pick up while you hang on to the hope of finding the originals. —Megan Pants (Rip Off)

SWEET JAP/ *DAS BOOT: split 7"*

When *Flipside* entered into the multi-year publishing hiatus that they're currently wallowing in, I was left with a bunch of releases from the *Flipside*, no-one-wants-to-review-this pile. I didn't even listen to most of the stuff. I just stuck it in a shoe box to await a less discriminating time in my life. A few months ago, I finally went through the box to see if I was missing out on any gems, and I found this seven-inch. The cover is really vague and arty, and it took me a while to figure out which bands were on it, but I figured out that Sweet JAP was one of the bands. I knew that name because, if I'm not mistaken, the singer of this band is the guy who did the intro to the newest D4 album. I'd heard good things about them, so I figured I should give this record a spin. I was blown away. It's like finding a fifty dollar bill in the pocket of a jacket that you haven't worn for years. Sweet JAP play tight and trashy rock'n'roll that's reminiscent of the early Replacements in its catchy rawness and reminiscent of Teengenerate in its ability to make your stereo sound like it's in the middle of a speaker-blowing orgasm. The Das Boot

side is good, too. It's also trashy rock'n'roll, but more in the vein of the New Bomb Turks at their best. As you can probably tell, though, it's the Sweet JAP side that's got me going nuts. So, yeah, this release is a couple of years old but what the hell? A gem is a gem. Check it out. —Sean Carswell (Nice & Neat)

SWITCHBLADE KITTENS: *Hey Punk! Try Heroine(s): CD*

I don't think there are enough all-girl or girl-fronted bands that suit my taste, so I'm always on the lookout for new ones that won't disappoint me. I was pretty happy to come across the Switchblade Kittens' new six-song CD. What's interesting about this band is that there are no guitarists. There are three bass players, one drummer, and a female vocalist. In no way does this impede their sound, though. In fact, knowing this and listening to the music, you can't help but feel a little impressed at the way the band pulls it off. The songs are fun and catchy and maybe more pop than punk, but they still rock. The first time I listened through the six songs, it occurred to me that the experience was kind of like when you're watching a bad movie made for a teen audience, but the soundtrack has enjoyable songs with cool female vocals. Turns out that "All Cheerleaders Die" (the second one on the CD and my favorite one to bop along with) is the theme song for a horror flick of the same name. I do have one complaint. It is never a good idea to cover any sappy theme song from any sappy movie, particularly the embarrassing, awful *Titanic*. And Celine Dion's "My Heart Will Go On" still sucks ass no matter who tries to give it a twist. That's okay, though. I still want to hear more from the Kittens. —Feliz (Switchblade Kittens)

TEMPLARS: *Phase II: CD*

Ahh, that's more like it. A resissue of the band's second album. Great songs on here, all done nice and purty with that jangly-guitar sound that has since become one of their trademarks. If you're into the bald boy rock thang, this is easily one of the last decade's bright spots in a pigeonhole that has been otherwise mighty scarce on quality music in recent years. Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (GMM)

THIRTY-TWO FRAMES: *Self-titled: CD*

Jay Palumbo's past in Elliott (particularly the elegiac *False Cathedrals*) wouldn't have led me to believe that he'd be involved with a straight-forward hardcore record, but here it is, sounding equal parts young Ian MacKaye, Reach The Sky, Unitas and Endpoint (among other musical reference points). This is a punk record in the sense that it wonders how people get so anesthetized, so dull and bland. It's not explicitly political in the sense that it shouts "Fuck Bush" at every turn, but rather in the sense that it challenges received ideas (religion in "Saints Stolen," consumer culture in "Affluenza") and offers suggestions about what questions to ask to begin finding the answers. This disc also includes a rather rockin' reinterpretation of Tom Petty's "I Need to Know." —Puckett (Revelation)

TOMMY AND THE TERRORS: *On the Run: 7" EP*

I have a lot of respect for these guys. They drove through a bad snow storm to play a Grange Hall in Maine to an audience of about four. And they played like the place was full. This 7" is right on par.

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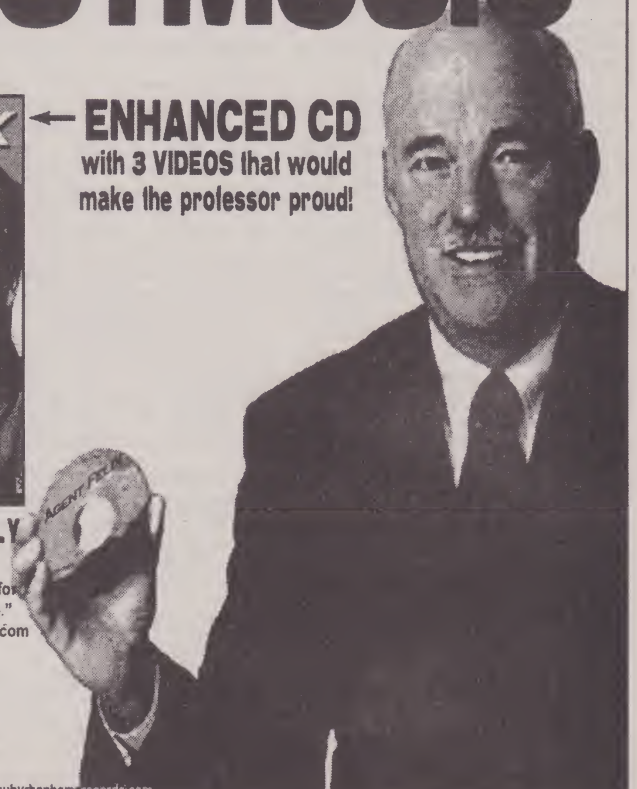
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They play tight and clean, not really messing around. Just straight up good ol' punk with a little rock influence. A nice taste if you haven't heard them yet, or a good addition if you have. —Megan Pants (TKO)

TORG: *Hot Yogurt Enema*: CD

From the letter attached to the CD: "we do understand that not everyone will like our music but are hoping that if you don't like it you could at least make the review as funny as possible so that we could still post it on our website." I mean, WHAT THE FUCK am I supposed to do NOW??? All I really know is that before I listened to this, I looked at the cover and thought "hmm...this graphic design evokes the look of the *Meet the Beatles* album cover." Fifty minutes later, when the lumbering punk/rock/metal/bodily function assault had ceased, I looked at the cover again — two flabby bruisers in Sloppy Seconds' weight class, the first holding microphones both fore and aft to the second gentleman, ostensibly to capture the sonic rapture of his dual-ended gas passing — and my first thought was that I wished it was a three-hundred-pound chick on there instead, so they could add a third mic and go for the fart/belch/queefe trifecta (I guess it's sorta like I heard San Diego described — you lose forty IQ points just stepping off the plane). The one legitimately brilliant song in this showcase of suavity is "Not Quite a Love Song (Clam Slop)," which sounds, almost unbelievably, like El Duce fronting the Jimi Hendrix Experience. I'll put this on at a party at least once before I die, but if it gets taken off ten seconds into song #2, I won't throw the first punch, especially not when I still can't figure out whether they're the Rancid Vat or the Horshacks of the new millennium. BEST SONG TITLE: "Burping up Barf" BEST SONG: "Based on a True Story" or "Not Quite a Love Song (Clam Slop)" AMAZING FANTASTIC TRIVIA FACT: The singer's name is "G.G. Duce," but, unconscionably, no member's name is "Peter Torg." —Rev. Nørb (Clambake)

TOXIC NARCOTIC: *We're All Doomed*: CD

Do this: take a sock (like a thick sock, not one of those thin dress ones), fill it with chestnuts (and walnuts would be okay), soak it in adrenaline, duct tape it to the ceiling fan, put the fan on the high speed (generally done by pulling the chain), then stand on a chair so the sock hits your face when it goes around. Toxic Narcotic is a better Poison Idea than Poison Idea was most of the time. —Cuss Baxter (Go Kart)

TOY DOLLS: *Fat Bob's Feet*: CD

Album number seven gets the reissue treatment and those of us who wrote these guys off a long time ago get a second chance to vindicate themselves, sing along to classics like "Bitten by a Bed Bug," "The Sphinx Stinks" and "Back in 79" and once again marvel at Olga's formidable fretwork. Tacked on for good measure are both sides of the "Turtle Crazy" single. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

TOY DOLLS: *Wakey Wakey*: CD

A reissue of the Dolls' sixth studio album, this is a vast improvement over the previous debacle, *Bare Faced Cheek*. Out of favor on this bad boy is unmemorable, uninspired songwriting and back in vogue are instant classics like

"Cloughy Is a Bootboy" and first-rate covers of "No Particular Place to Go" and the classical staple "Sabre Dance." Add to that a tight as hell performance and Olga's surgeon-precision punk guitar pyrotechnics and what more could one ask for? Recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

TRANSPLANTS, THE: *Travis from Blink 182 and Tim Armstrong's Crappy Band "Hey, Look, We Are on MTV"*: CD

I can imagine how this CD came about. Travis, the drummer/guy who looks out of place in Blink 182 is sick of being best known for being in a TRL band, so he calls Tim Armstrong of Rancid, thinking Tim will lend a sympathetic ear. During the call, they decide to form a band to show that they still have street cred or something. They call a guy with neck tattoos and a shaved head because he will look really tough in the photo and record some stuff that the kids will like now that Slipknot is all big, which pretty much ends up in something that I would have liked when I was seventeen and thought anything ripping off Big Black was cool. And yes, I see the irony of this story starting off with a drummer trying to seem cooler that ends up with sounding like a band with a drum machine. But do THEY? Hmm, okay, I must admit that I wrote that all during the first song. The next song seemed an exercise on writing songs based on the ability to use expletives (hey, it's 2002, the word "fuck" effects me as much as "hey"), and then, um, well, Tim Armstrong was in Op Ivy, right? And his label puts out a lot of good music, right? You would think he would know a thing or two about what sounds like good punk rock music. Or, you would, until you listen to this. This is not very punk, but that isn't such a crime so much as it's also not good. This is one of those weird cases when someone sounds like they are ripping off the bands that were influenced by them. Anyway, Travis should stick to showing off how he has big fancy SUVs in entertainment magazines and Tim should stick to putting out good music, whether or not it has him on the cover. —Rich (Hellcat)

TREEBERRY'S: *Talkin' about Treeberry's*: LP

If you haven't noticed, Japan has the most fanatic fans out there. Take this band for example. This three piece plays an authentic version of '60s pop rock. Very reminiscent of the early Beatles and a band I remember my dad listening to as a child, the Mindbenders. It sounds like it was recorded live in a studio setting on an old two-track recording machine, like the bands of that time. A Hammond organ is incorporated at times to add to the appeal. The songs are so bubblegum, you can't help yourself from grinning like a child who has had too much sugar. Pretty cool and groovy in my book. —Donofthedeath (Sounds of Subterranea)

TSUNAMI BOMB: *The Ultimate Escape*: CD

Wasn't sure what I was in store for. I haven't been that much of a fan of what has come out of the Kung Fu roster lately but I am a sucker for female led vocals. I popped this sucker on with apprehension and was truly delighted with what was forced into my ears. I thought in my head that I hear the music of AFI meets the Dance Hall Crashers. Fun stuff through and through. Songs are extremely melodic but forceful. Makes me giddy with childish delight. —Donofthedeath (Kung Fu)

TUSK: *Get Ready*: CD

Honestly, I used to really like this kind of music. But then I went to a few too many black metal shows and had to bear the company of a few too many dolled-up dorks in studded leather turtlenecks and various other "scary" wardrobe accessories and I've never been able to take this shit seriously ever since. This probably sounds just like a gazillion other doomy dark metal bands out there that I don't ever want to know about, but the parts I like the best remind me of the Fartz or the Accused with a little Integrity mixed in for good satanic measure. Heavy, vomitous, and oozing with beelzebubbing white heads — all with a decidedly "the devil is cool" bent. Crust punks and grind metal kids will eat it up and then stab themselves to death with their sporks. I hope. —Aphid Peewit (HeWhoCorrupts)

ULTRA MAROON: *Lifeless Like Blood*: CD

I first saw these guys over a year ago at a day show that ended up getting crazy and I was five hours late for work the next day and still drunk, but that's another story. I was blown away by Ultra Maroon. They're a two-piece out of Tucson featuring Mike on guitar with a big ol' pedal board and Dicky from the much missed Blacks on drums. That's it — just drum and guitar. Well, Mike yells some guttural noises on some songs and it's so damn good. It just makes me want to dance instead of write about it. —Megan Pants (Star Time)

VACANCIES, THE: *Gutpunch*: CD

Decent punk rock and roll in the Dead Boys/Thunders vein. (Which, you should all know, is preferable to the Stooges, MC5 vein, but I digress, and probably earn myself some enemies in the process.) Of course, the kids in Cleveland have their priorities straight! (Are you sick of my Midwest pride yet? Too bad!) After awhile, I got a little bored with the CD; but I bet this band is fun live. If this were a cereal, it'd be Chex. Pretty good! —Maddy (Smog Veil)

VANISHING, THE: *In the Bat Haus*: CD-R

Odd. I can see why people have compared them to Siouxsie and the Banshees, but I would add in some watered down St. Vitus and a bit of SNL's "Church Lady," to boot. Atmospheric, haunted house organ music with shlocky punk trimmings and nice out-of-tune singing. Strange. I think I might like this if I was drunk and had a crush on one of the girls in the band. —Aphid Peewit (Cochon)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Addicted to Oil*: CD

Touted as a new addition to the original oil compilation series, this puppy even includes liner notes by Gary Bushell himself. Most of the tracks on here are amazingly good, considering how utterly crappy this genre has become, especially in recent years. All of the tracks are new, many are unreleased. In order, Discipline: imagine the Vanilla Muffins with the gruff singer of the 4-Skins up front. Cockney Rejects: Vocals lack the intensity of the first couple o' albums, but the song itself, a ditty with a requisite chorus that would make a good terrace chant, ain't too shabby. Argy Bargo: Thought their last album was slightly above okay, but this is a nice bit of virulent viciousness with throat shredding

vocals. The Business: Dude, it's the fucking Business, for chrissakes. Do I really need to rant on about how good this track is? Let's just say you could sandwich it between any of their "classic" tracks on a mix tape and no one would ever notice. Klasse Kriminal: Loud, brash, brief, up-tempo and melodic in all the right ways. The Filaments: Hate most modern ska anymore, thanks to radio over-saturation, but dug this song lots. Fuck the pigs, indeed. Deadline: Reminds me a little of the old LA band the Eyes, only with louder guitars. Nice ballsy pop with female vocals. Agnostic Front: The story so far: band forms, plays ultra thrash, then bad speed metal, and then reinvents itself yet again as a traditional oi band. To their credit, the song ain't all that bad, although I still highly doubt I'd buy one of their newer releases. Red Alert: Another classic track from these guys, this is a rocker that feels nowhere close to the four minute length it is. Resistance 77: Rough-edged punk with pop hooks up the ass to facilitate singing along while tearing the place apart. Last Resort: Apparently, Roi still has violence on his mind. I was afraid he might've gone soft over the years. Menace: Pretty straightforward oi tune. Not bad, but I was expecting more considering the band. Slaughter and the Dogs: Uh, maybe it's time for another long retirement, guys, 'cause bad glam still ain't made a comeback and this sure won't speed up the process. Beerzone: Sounds like early Test Tube Babies, which is by all means a compliment. Blood Brothers: Sounds like "Guns for the Afghan Rebels"/"Lust for Glory"-era Upstarts, which makes perfect sense considering it features Mensi and Cast Iron. Crashed Out: The piano solo, a piss-take of the "Halloween" theme as its base, was perfect. Great tune. Special Duties: "Pop star punks? No, we're real shock troops..." Couldn't put it any better myself. Foreign Legion: Another pretty standard tune, not to misconstrued as meaning it sucks, 'cause it doesn't, but they just ain't as mind-blowing as some others included here. The Crack: Have always liked what I've heard from these guys, but I don't think the world needed yet another cover of "House of the Rising Sun." The Gonads: The history of punk set to a modern crunch metal riff. Final verdict? Jeez, try as I may, I can't help but give this a glowing recommendation. —Jimmy Alvarado (Captain Oi)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Barricaded Suspects and Four Old Toxic Shock 7" EPs*: CD

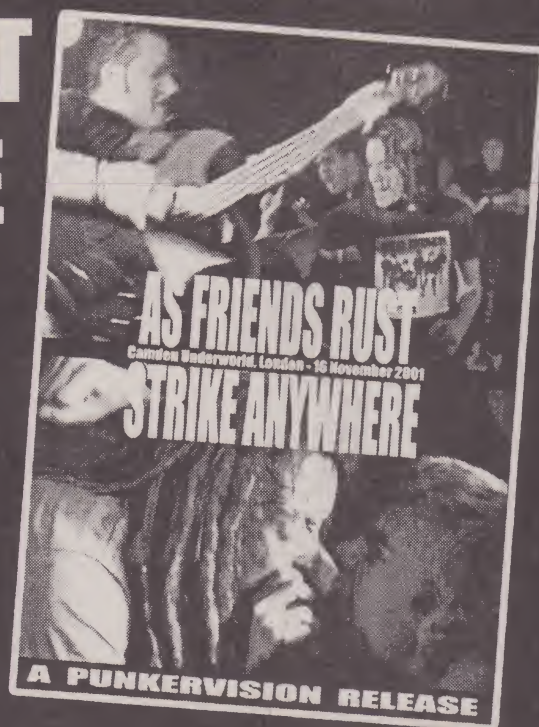
Back in the early 1980s there were very few sources in the LA area to buy obscure punk rock. You could get the Black Flag and TSOL, but to get anything by a smaller band at the time was difficult. One record store you could count on was Toxic Shock. The problem was they were located in Pomona, CA and I lived on the west side. I also didn't have a car that would go that far or make it up to freeway speed. The distance was too great. I was fortunate to go there a couple of times. Man, it was a great store! They seemed to have almost every punk release under the sun. To show how good it was there, my brother literally purchased two feet of 7" there on one of my visits. They were a store for the punks run by the punks. I think the store moved to Tucson, AZ around the mid to late '80s and changed the name to Westworld / Toxic Ranch. That was a great blow to the local scene. They also became a label in that early time period while in CA and these were some of the

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releases from the legendary label. They were also responsible in introducing Raw Power of Italy to a larger scale after Chris / BCT had put out a tape. Bill / Dr. Strange was smart enough to re-release this classic material to the masses. I hadn't seen or listened to these songs in years (or a couple of decades?). My brother was the owner of the originals and made me not purchase it on my own. To see how good these releases are check out who's on what. *Barricaded Suspects* contains Peace Corpse, Human Therapy, Red Tide, Killroy, Knockabouts, Abcess, Suburban Mutilation, Septic Death, the Doll, Massacre Guys, Decry, Roach Motel, Bonded in Unity, Mad Parade, The Hundredth Monkey, Vision / Decay, Hue & Cry, Pillsbury Hardcore and the Zimbo Chimps. *4 Old Toxic Shock 7"* EP's contains the *Noise from Nowhere* comp that features Kent State, Modern Industry, Moslem Birth and Manson Youth; Peace Corpse *Quincy 7"*; Red Tide *Kelp and Salal 7"*; Massacre Guys *Behind the 8 Ball 7"*. Man, that is a lot of shit! Good to see that there is a demand of the past and I don't have to pay Ebay prices for it. History is not a bad thing! —Donofthedeath (Doctor Strange)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Battle for the Airwaves Vol. 2: 7"*

Wow! The Workin' Stiffs, The Bodies, The Wretched Ones and The Templars all on one 7 inch. These are four bands way up on my high rotation list already. Each band holds their own on here with a song a piece. A hell of a teaser, but a hell of a quick rush. If you aren't familiar, all four bands have a working class, street punk kinda sound. Influences from late '70s English punk can be heard. This is great, but too damn short. Gimme more damnit! —Toby Tober (Radio)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Cuts Vol. 1: CD*

I've never professed to being a professional writer or an expert on punk rock. I do have an opinion though. I have pretty much stuck around for the last twenty plus years listening to this noise. As I read the intro to this release, I am in agreement that comps are different these days. Bands in the past would send their best effort and make it pretty much exclusive to that one release. If it wasn't good, it wouldn't be released. Lately, you get record label sampler comps that flood the rack space or comps with recycled material. It's rare that you find a comp that completely has unreleased tracks. If you see what the old comps go for on Ebay, you can see that they are worth something. Enough of my old man memories. Back to opinion. I don't listen to a lot of the OC beach punk garage stuff personally. So, many of these bands I have never heard of. The two that I recognize and have heard are the Smut Peddlers and Cell Block 5. Retodd told me of the up-comers Broken Bottles. He liked them so much, he booked them on a Razorcake show recently. Tracks that stood out to me were from the previously mentioned and The Thunder Pistols, D-Cup, Beer City Rockers, Extortions, The Negatives, The Switch-Ups, The Spooky, The Put-Ons, The Stand and The Cadavers. That's a high percentage of bands on this eighteen band comp that peaked my interest. A good comp doing what it's supposed to do — introduce me to some new bands I have never heard of. —Donofthedeath (Hostage)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Drinking About Songs: 2 X LP*

First off, I've got a deep admiration for

Very Small Records. Know it or not, they've released many mighty influential comps and helped out a ton of then-obscure, now-well-known bands (like Operation Ivy, Pinhead Gunpowder, Green Day, Neurosis, and Jawbreaker) when they were just starting out. The guy who runs the operation, Dave, is probably one of the most up-standing citizens in a business and scene that is rife with a lack of ethics. You'd do very well to look at Very Small's catalog. That said, this is my least favorite comp they've put out in awhile. Although I admire the open ear — there's straight-up country numbers, let-me-suck-that-bar-towel drunk punk, and Small Wonder's "Crop Duster" that sounds like it could be on an Indigo Girls solo album (or a female top forty song. Don't press me. It's not my realm of expertise), it's an iffy affair, making it hard to put on and like all the way through. There are some cool songs in the thirty-three: Super Chinchilla Rescue Mission, Grabass Charlesons, The Foxy Sluts, The Civic Minded Five, and the Bar Feeders don't disappoint. But then there's too much that's just okay or something I'd wish not to hear like '70s bar rock, mediocre pop punk, and just "plain, blah" rock. I say go with *Faux Pas Potpourri*, or either one of the two alcoholic-themed comps proceeding this one: *Songs About Drinking or Liverache*, which I like and recommend to this day. —Todd (Very Small)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *First Strike: CD*

Craig from Schizophrenic has been working like a mad man on a mission to get these BCT tracks that were originally only available on tape out on CD. If you don't know BCT (Borderless Countries Tapes), they were heavily responsible in introducing international hardcore to the states from 1982 to 1986 one tape at a time. I've seen the tape deck. BCT is up and running again if you want the original tapes by contacting Chris / BCT @ <bctinsd@aol.com>. I know Sound Idea Distribution out of Florida also carries the tape. It's great that this is out again. Another thing I haven't listened to in a couple of decades. This is the first comp tape of the twenty-seven tape series. American bands like the Clitboys, Future Ruins, Violation, Vatican Commandos (Moby's punk band!), Skoundrelz (I think Dogtown legend, Tony Alva, played in this band at one point or another), Mr. Epp, Poison Center, Eat the Rich, Cultural Breakthrough and The Accused (Seattle legends). Some studio and some live recordings that still stand the test of time. This takes me back to high school. Ten bands, fifty songs. That's a lot to soak in, but well worth the purchase. —Donofthedeath (\$10ppd to Schizophrenic)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Four Old Toxic Shock 7" EPs '83-'84: CD*

The title says it all: four old seven-inch EPs from the Toxic Shock Records vaults, all remastered and digitized nice and purty for the new millennium. Included here are the *Noise from Nowhere* comp (featuring Kent State, Moslem Birth, Human Therapy and Manson Youth), the first EP from Peace Corpse (formerly Moslem Birth), Red Tide's *Kelp and Salal* EP and Massacre Guys' first EP (featuring a future member of Descendents/All). Most of the tracks stand up pretty well to the passage of time and are a fun, if not always crucial, reminder of some of the stuff that was going on in the scene at that time that didn't involve the Circle Jerks and

Black Flag. One very minor gripe: Considering the fact the Dr. Strange released Manson Youth's posthumous seven-inch EP, it's strange that they didn't go through the trouble to change the incorrect title of the band's contribution to *Noise from Nowhere*, here still incorrectly titled "Penis Brain" but actually a sort of medley of three shorter songs. —Jimmy Alvarado (Dr. Strange)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Global Hostility: CD*

This showed up in the Razorcake PO Box from England, and I happened to be the guy opening the envelope. I took a look at the packaging and it's totally DIY — cut and paste, photocopied — but done so well that it was clear these guys had been doing-it-themselves for a while. I looked at the band list and saw bands from places like Estonia, Nepal, Argentina, Finland, Uruguay, Israel, and over a dozen more countries. I looked for the US representative. It was The Boils. I like The Boils. I thought to myself, it's been a long time since I was taken totally by surprise by a comp. Maybe this one will show me something new. And it did. It blew me away. It's largely a collection of oi/street punk bands, but it's done so well. Whenever you get bands from this many places, you're going to get a nice blend of scenes and influences and takes on the sounds of the Stiff Little Fingers and the Business and Cocksparrer and all those other great working-class bands. And here is a bunch of bands I've never heard of, like Portugal's Les Baton Rouge and Italy's The Sbirros and Holland's Uit de Sloot, taking those basic influences and kicking 'em in the ass. It amazes me that this label could put together this diverse of a group of bands on one fucking awesome comp. —Sean Carswell (No Front Teeth)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *I Hope the End Is Always the Beginning: CD*

I think so many neat things have come from the Japanese: sushi, Takara Blythe, Sanrio stationery, cutting-edge fashion for one-foot-high dolls and five-foot-high people. Most recently, though, I think the absolute best thing that's come from Japan is the latest compilation of Japanese punk rock from the people at Snuffy Smile. Snuffy Smile may be a cute name, but there is nothing sissy about the bands on this label. *I Hope the End Is Always the Beginning* is one CD that is comprised of two sections: Chapter One and Chapter Two. Chapter One consists of original songs by fourteen different bands, including Minority Blues Band, Bottledirt, and Pear of the West. Chapter Two consists of the same fourteen bands covering songs by bands like The Replacements, Stiff Little Fingers, and Cock Sparrer. There are twenty-eight tracks on this album, and every single one rocks. Even though more than half the time I can't understand the lyrics, I still want to sing along. I love this CD. Get your own copy now. —Felizon (Snuffy Smile)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *Life Is Ugly So Why Not Kill Yourself: CD*

Wow, I was wonderin' when someone would get around to reissuing this, and in this case, it appears that the culprit is Danny Phillips, who was one of those responsible for the original release. What you get here, kids, is a chance to own one of the early, definitive Southern California punk comps, featuring tracks from (in order of appearance) Red Cross

(Redd Kross before the other Red Cross threatened to sue, and before they were bitten by the glam bug), Descendents, Anti, Ill Will, Civil Dismay, China White, Mood of Defiance, Minutemen, 100 Flowers/the Urinals, Zurich 1916, Plebs and Saccharine Trust, nearly all of which aren't available anywhere else. Although nearly all of the tracks hold up pretty well considering it's been twenty years since it was originally available (Mood of Defiance's track in particular is still a stunner), it's worth the price of admission alone to hear Red Cross (which at the time consisted of the McDonald Bros, future Circle Jerk Greg Hetson on guitar and future Black Flag singer Ron Reyes on drums) uncharacteristically thrash things up a bit. Rumor has it that the other two releases in the series are to be reissued as well, so keep your eyes peeled, as all three volumes are highly recommended. —Jimmy Alvarado (Delirium)

VARIOUS ARTISTS: *You Call This Music?!, Vol. II: CD*

Finally a disc that offers up some seething straight up punk with blood on its boots, piss in its gut and hate in its veins. This has a nice helping of bands with snotty female vocals, something I'm rather fond of myself. For whatever it's worth, my favorites are the Jag Offs, Backside, Pillbox Terror and the Voids. A little bit of something for everyone, including a handful of duds, but all with a nice chippy attitude. I think this would make a decent party CD. —Aphid Peewit (Geykido Comet)

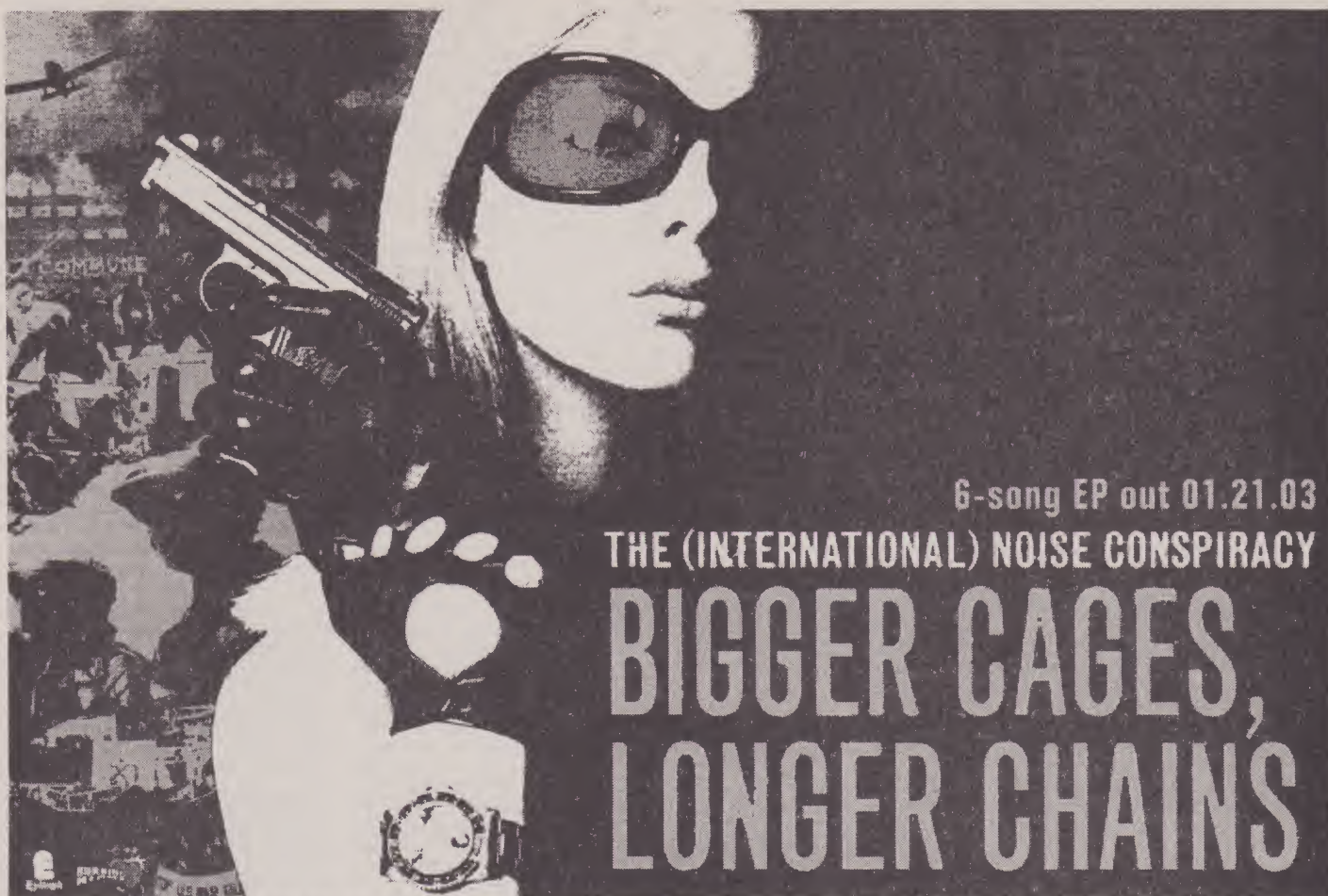
WOOLWORTHY: *Recycler: CD*

Big guitar post-emo pop crap. Makes me fantasize that Buffalo Bill, the serial killer in *Silence of the Lambs*, was a real person and had a thing for shitty emo-related bandmember-meat. —Jimmy Alvarado (Boss Tuneage)

WORLD BURNS TO DEATH: *Human Dogs... Tossed to the Dogs of War: 7"*

WBTD charges out tooth-chipping, frantic, and complexly played political hardcore that has Russian writing all over it (although it's sung in English). The band is oddly — yet refreshingly — historically political. One song references Kursk, calling it "Scheissekrieg" (shit war). Fuck it. Might as get some WWII history from punk. It doesn't seem to fit into many school books nowadays. (The Battle of Kursk, between the Germans and Russians, engaged more than four million soldiers, thirteen thousand armored vehicles, and eleven thousand aircraft. Lemmy of Motorhead's been quoted as saying it was his favorite tank battle because it was the biggest.) There are more than a couple of Crass elements that WBTD employs — from the vivid brutality of war cover art, to the layering of vocals (one singing, one talking), to the cacophony that makes you think the band's going to melt down like a faulty nuclear reactor at any time — but they definitely don't sound like a clone band living off of past glories from battles fought. It sounds like war anew. —Todd (Prank)

NOTE TO READERS: We had a ton of record reviews this time. We added pages to our review section, and still had over 100 record reviews that didn't fit. Please visit our website, <www.razorcake.com> to read these reviews.



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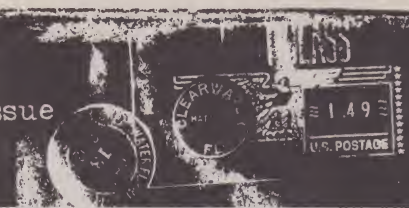
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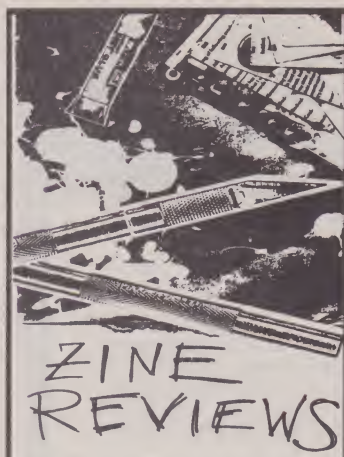
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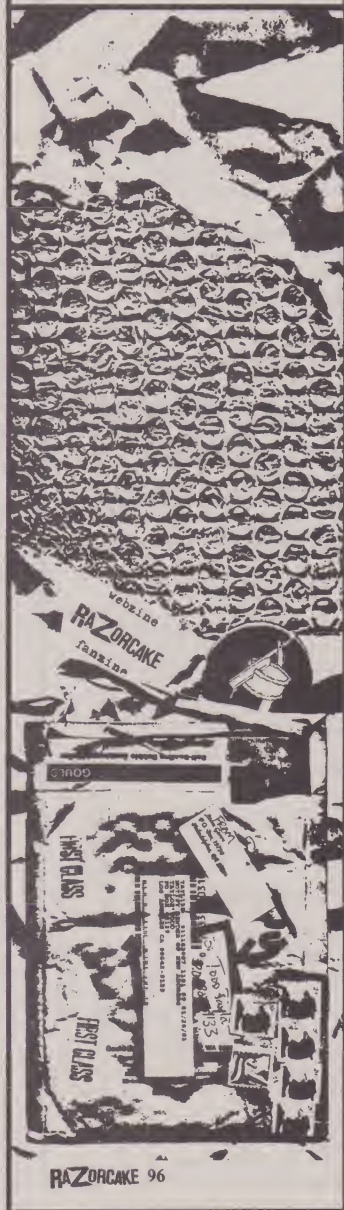
to bands and labels that were reviewed either in this issue or posted on www.razorcake.com in the last two months.



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3 CHORD RIOT,

#1, free, 8 1/2 x 11, copied, 4 pgs. Due to economics, Matt Average hasn't been able to put out *Engine* for a bit now, but his ever-crankin' mind just couldn't stop, so he put together a shorty. It's basically a brief column, his grade-A pictures, and a slew of album reviews. Why should you care? Because Matt is one of two people who I personally know who's an ever-evolving, walking encyclopedia of DIY hardcore punk who hasn't burned out or become an Ebay slave. And of those two people, he can write really well about it and stays excited. Think of a younger, West Coast Al Quint and you wouldn't be far off. Looking for some hardcore gems without a publicist shining their light up your ass? Want the hot tip on super-limited press runs of soon-to-be-classic slabs? Here's your secret ticket. If you get the chance, hit <www.somestrangemusic.com>, also run by Matt. It's one of the best no-bullshit, no-frills hardcore mailorders out there. —Todd (3 Chord Riot, PO Box 64666, LA, CA 90064)

ASSASSIN AND THE WHINER,

#12, \$1, 5 1/2 x 7, copied, 30 pgs. This is an old issue of *Assassin and the Whiner*, so I don't know why we're just getting it now for review. (I think Carrie's up to #14 now). Really great comics about the life of Carrie. This time around, there's stuff about drinking (alcohol and coffee), girlfriends (including a truly horrifying tale of a relationship gone wrong), depression, and more. I always look forward to getting this zine. I think Carrie's at her best when she writes about everyday stuff, and there's a bunch of that in this issue, including being mistaken for a LAPD officer and a quest for anti-farting herbal medicine. If you haven't read it yet, check it out! —Maddy (Carrie McNinch, PO Box 481051, LA, CA 90048)

BARBIE'S DEAD,

#7, \$?, 8 1/2 x 11, copied, 20 pgs. Ack. My least favorite format! 8 1/2 by 11 inches, stapled once in the upper left corner. Oh well. This zine includes: musings about the possibility of relocating to outer space, lots of music, zine, show, and book reviews, interviews with (Birmingham, England) band Eastfield and (Edinburgh, I think) band Sad Society. My advice? Next time around, have more non-review writing. —Maddy (Alex, Woodhouse, The Square, Gunnslake, PL18 9BW, UK)

BLACKLIST, #3, \$3, 8 1/2 x 11, black and white, 60 pgs. I met this kid in a black hat. He

gave me this magazine. His name was Sean Carlson. He does this magazine and runs a small publishing company. There is a story in *Blacklist* where Sean heads off into Skid Row and other shady areas around Los Angeles and talks with some of the people who you would not want to talk with, but he did and he wrote about it and you can read about it when you write him for a copy of *Blacklist*. —Bradley Williams (Blacklist, PMB 1111, Redondo Beach, CA 90277; <Sean_theblacklist@hotmail.com>)

ENTERRUPTED, #1 & #2,

\$?, 5 1/2 x 7, offset, (#1) 14 pgs, (#2) 22 pgs. When I first got these zines in a big ole review pile, they immediately stood out. The cover of #2 is hand-screened and looks really cool. And each page has all these loose pages-postcards, photographs, and design pieces. But the contents weren't that interesting. Some band interviews, some short articles. If you're into the bands they interview (Raksha Mancham, Caroliner Rainbow) you might wanna check this out. Design nuts should take a peek, too. —Maddy (PO Box 884626, SF, CA, 94188-4626)

FRESH RAG, #4, \$2/trade,

5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 52 pgs. I was worried when I first got this. It says right in it that Maddy gave a good review in a prior *Razorcake*, and yet it appeared at first glance to be yet another mediocre photocopy zine. Then I read it. Bonus point #1 — saying "If you don't like this zine then go fuckin' write your own" right in the intro. Bonus point #2 — Ms. Holly refers to her zine as a magazine. The whole zine elitism of zine vs. Magazine has been effectively killed. Not every word in this is a gem, but as a whole, it is far above par. The reviews are written with a very effective casual style. I think my favorite piece was Lord Rutledge's "Dee Snider is God" piece, which also seems trite at first glance and ends up as a well written work with many thoughtful points. I will be ordering future issues. —Rich Mackin (Holly, 816 Baldwin Ave. #1, Norfolk, VA 23517)

GARAGE AND BEAT, #7, \$3.50,

8 1/2 x 11, off-set, 54 pgs. If you are into garage rock, both old and new, you need to read this magazine! Interviews with the Neptunas and Andy Tielman, a history of the Hamburg scene, lots of useful reviews (especially for people like me, who love this stuff, but can't afford to buy without researchin'), and more! This mag is definitely devoted to the garage nut. Lots of in-depth geekin' out,

which I can appreciate! Recommended! —Maddy (P. Edwin Letcher, 2754 Prewett St., LA, CA 90031)

GENETIC DISORDER #16, \$3,

6 1/2 x 10, color cover, 73 pgs. I wasn't even going to review this since Todd did in the last issue, but he misprinted the issue number (stupid jerk) and vastly understated just how fucking *funny* *Genetic Disorder* is. That's all. Here's your bone (from an article on nicknames of Larry's peers from the southern California desert): "Dutch Boy didn't get his name because he liked to stick his finger in dykes. He was a paint huffer with a constant ring of flaky gold paint around his lips." —Cuss Baxter (Genetic Disorder, PO Box 15237, San Diego, CA 92175; <geneticdisorder.net>)

PARIAH, #1 \$???,

5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied. As a thirty-year-old political activist, I have no real need for this zine, which could be why I am not who this is meant for. While us surly activist types have this information at our disposal, not every kid who goes to a punk show knows little more than "the system is fucked up," and this is a good starting tool to get street punk kids at shows to start thinking about the world without shoving political theory down anyone's throat. The layout is so effectively simple that it has me close to being in awe for its reinventing of the punk aesthetic. Did they tape stuff directly to the copier glass? Nothing groundbreaking for Zinn fans or *Slug and Lettuce* readers, but a good intro for those wishing to ditch their apathy, or a good thing to pass on to a younger friend (this was done by high school kids, though it doesn't exactly show.) —Rich Mackin (Pariah, 201 S. Ashland, La Grange, IL 60525)

POOR AND FORGOTTEN,

#8, \$1 or trade, 5 1/4 x 8 1/2, copied, 14 pgs. With a photocopy of the author's prescription to Paxil (usually for depression or obsessive/compulsive disorder) and being in jail, I have a feeling this zine's more about self-therapy than anything else. There's a hand-written, blow-by-blow rant on how he hates a radio program and death and disorder poetry. Matthew likes the word "cum" and uses it often by itself or making up new words, like "welcum," and "cuntinue." It's obviously the work of tortured soul cutting and pasting what'll stick. —Todd (Matthew Johnson, PO Box 59, Linwood, MA 01525-9998)

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long shot
high rise

extreme long shot
man holding

close up
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medium shot
love scene

medium shot
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extreme close up
nail

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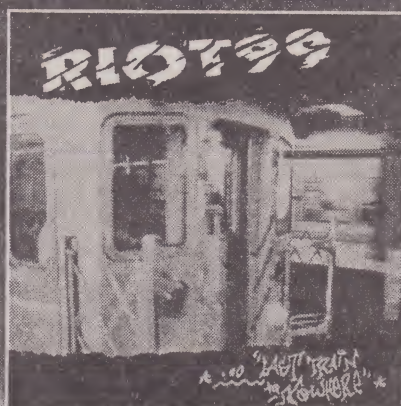
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RATED ROOKIE, vol. 1, issue 3, \$2.50, 8 1/2 x 11, offset, glossy cover, 36 pgs. Outside the world of zines, what I'm about to say may sound like a slam, but everyone reading this knows that I'm paying *Rated Rookie* a high compliment when I say that this zine deserves a place on your crapper. It's very well-suited for bathroom reading. It's excellent in that respect. All of the articles, stories, interviews, and tidbits are incredibly short and to the point, exactly the length of one quick shit. Of course, if you're on the can for the long haul, two or three pieces out of *Rated Rookie* will keep you company. My only warning is that some of these short articles are really engaging and may have you sitting in your own stink for longer than you have to. But don't fear. This zine is portable. It can leave your bathroom as well. I've got to admit that I'm not giving you this advice after any field trials or anything. It's purely conjecture. This zine didn't last long enough for me to have to use the bathroom. While I was in the post office one day, I actually started reading a chart in here about why men's magazines like *Maxim* are making millions. It had me cracking up in line. Don't try this. Other people in post office lines are pissed off. They don't like it when you laugh. I took this zine home, where it was safe to laugh at will, and read funny pieces about biology karaoke, hating New Found Glory, working in a gas station, giving blow jobs, drug reviews, and making piss porn videos. Not exactly the deepest stuff in the world, but it all had a good sense of humor. And the stories came across with that cool, you're-not-alone attitude that I love in zines. I read this zine cover to cover and enjoyed most everything. The only down part was the short piece about a boy and his doorknob. Some things just can't be saved by cleverness. But let's not focus on the negative here. Everything else about this zine was cool, and I'll look forward to future issues. —Sean Carswell (*Rated Rookie*, 28-07 38th St. Suite 4L, Astoria, NY 11103)

READ, the fear issue, \$4, 8 1/2 x 11, glossy cover, 99 pgs. This magazine takes a while to get through, not because it's boring or put together all shitty, but that it's all filled up with stories and interviews and not very many pictures, but that's good because the title is *READ* and not *American Photo* (I don't even know if that is a real magazine. I think I might have made that up) and so it's not sneaky and all trying to trick you into reading but really wanting you to look at pictures of people's backyards. I

don't know if there is a magazine for backyards. Is there? If not, I think that might go over well. *American Backyard, the Magazine*. That might be pretty cool and all. The critics could say stuff like "Wow! *American Backyard, the Magazine* is amazing... a brilliant act... etc." So I think I'll start work on *American Backyard, the Magazine* over the Christmas holidays. I'll let all of you know more about it as it starts to come together. But until then, you might want to check out *READ* magazine 'cause it's got a lot of stuff that you reading type music-listening folks'll like. —Bradley Williams (*READ Magazine*, PO Box 3437 Astoria, NY 11103)

SECOND GRADER (SUPER

DISCO), trade, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 24 pgs.

Once again, the world of dumb shit and porno and reviews captured in pure and unadulterated and flawless stupidity. —Bradley Williams (*Citizen Balls*, 5 Haele P. Makawao, HI 96768)

SINK HOLE, review letter

The letter reads: "Enclosed please find the current issue of my zine for you to review. It is available to anyone who is interested for the price of \$1.00, 3 stamps or a zine trade. The zine is black and white (duh) and is 33 pages long. We publish bimonthly and our next issue comes out in August. Thanks for checking it out. Cheers!" I remember getting this zine but I lost it. I don't know anything about it other than this relic of a letter, but supposedly "the only bad publicity is no publicity" so... I guess they've probably put out about three copies since this one came out and by now you already know about this one. —Bradley Williams (*Marck Generous*, 2105 19th St. West Bardenton, FL 34205)

STARDUMB PUNKROCKZINE:

#6, free, 5 1/2 x 8 1/2, copied, 33 pgs. As with any record company that put(s) out a zine (*Coldfront*, *No Idea*, *Flipside*), it's up to the editor if they're going to come out with an infomercial on their own bands or a more balanced zine. Stardumb walks the fine line. I'm not totally sold nor am I shaking a finger at them for shameless plugs. There's a good interview with Toys That Kill (although it was reprinted from *MRR*. Stardumb put out a TTK split 7"), a purely self-serving, blah interview with the Mallrats (new album coming out on Stardumb), a fun, shorty with Nørb (always a beacon of inspiration), and an really interesting article on Sogo Ishii, a Japanese filmmaker who has a long history with punk rock that I'll be sure to try to hunt down his

movies later. My favorite column was by Lew-A-Go-Go, editor of the really cool *Vinyl-A-Go-Go* fanzine, about his two first crushes. The whole affair is cleanly laid out, and they do get around to reviewing bands not directly associated with the label. Think poppy, punk, boob-friendly rock, and you've got the feel. —Todd (Stardumb, PO Box 21145, 3001 AC Rotterdam, The Netherlands)

TESTED WITH VINEGAR,

(and a host of others under different names), trade/free/\$1, copied, 30 pgs.

I was given a group of zines that appear to be done by the same group of people; *Eat Yourself a Pie*, *Freaky Fuckn' Cornstalk*, *the Second Pointless Story*, a couple other small zines, slightly larger than a Zippo lighter, plus two other mysterious regular sized zines. I lost most of these while drunk at a bar and showing them to people. Whoever these people are, they are fuckn' stupid. This is some of the stupidest shit I have seen anyone waste time on. I would say it is the most ridiculous waste of time, but I would be doing many other idiots a grave injustice. I bet if you send some outdated coupons for yogurt or maybe some beer money to the following address you would get some dumb shit from them. I suggest you do. This rules. —Bradley Williams (PO Box 126805, SD, CA 92112)

THIRD GENERATION

NATION, #23, \$3, oversized, glossy cover, 74 pgs.

It's mostly in German, which I can't read, but if you stereotype the outlook (punk rock stuff) of the magazine and the bands (leather jackets and striped t-shirts) therein you can have fun by pretending to read German. You see, English is a Germanic Language and so there are some similarities between the two. So if you want to feel all bilingual and shit go and get this one, but I suppose you could also get any German magazine and stereotype it too. Oh well. —Bradley Williams (*Third Generation Nation*, Muhlenfeld 59, 45472 Mulheim, Germany)

VERBICIDE, #6, \$3.50, 8 1/2 x 11, offset, glossy cover, 80 pgs.

Verbicide is an ambitious zine that burst onto the scene right about the same time that *Razorcake* did. For some reason, that gives me an affinity for this zine. I don't know why. I guess because I'm in a similar situation as these guys, struggling to make *Razorcake* keep happening on the west coast while these guys are struggling to make *Verbicide* happen over on the east coast. We have

more in common with them than that, too. We focus more on music, yet publish books while *Verbicide* has more of a literary slant, yet put out records. Both *Razorcake* and *Verbicide* try to push the accepted boundaries of punk zines, us by writing articles about Howard Zinn and Emma Goldman, *Verbicide* by including stories by Ray Bradbury and interviews with Soft Skull Press. There are several differences between us and them. Fundamentally, we have different tastes in music. *Verbicide* runs interviews with bands like Grade and Angels in the Architecture, and we can't get anyone to even review albums by bands like that (unless Jimmy Alvarado needs more jewel cases). At the same time, their reviewers slam Against Me! while we can't stop singing their praises. But enough about similarities and differences. On to what's in this issue: interviews with Lee Ranaldo and Henry Rollins, an article on third party presidential candidates Harry Browne and Ralph Nader, another article on violence in India, cool short fiction by Christopher Connal, and an assortment of fiction, poetry, reviews, and photos. All and all, it's a solid issue with plenty of good shit to read. I say support these guys. Reward their courage in helping to push zinedom in new directions. —Sean Carswell (*Scissor Press*, PO Box 206512, New Haven, CT 06520)

WORSHIPPING MOTHER

NATURE, \$2, 5 1/4 x 8 1/2, 26 pgs.

I like Evil Bob. He forces me to think. This time out, he comes out with a very reasoned argument with the thesis that "Environmentalism seems to share many of the main factors that define a religion or organized church." Basically, he's suggesting that environmentalism is based on faith, not fact, and that the Earth Charter (a global constitution drawn up by environmentalists) will bring strife, unhappiness, and "economic stagnation." Even though Bob and I are fundamentally at odds a lot, he does bring up some good points that I'm willing to agree with, such as documents like the Earth Charter are statements of value, not policy. There's no shortage of laws that sound great until they get enforced. (Like a seatbelt and helmet laws. Yeah, I think you should wear one, but that's your choice to get killed or maimed. Also, fuck any law that allows cops to pull you over and fine you for "your own safety.") I also have to give Bob kudos for realizing this "work claims only to be speculation or humble opinion." I, however, see a couple of schisms in Bob's ruminations. Let's start off by stating that not all environmen-

talists see advancing technology as bad, it's just how technologies are currently utilized. Where are the stunning advancements in solar energy (that's a big fuckin' sun and it sure is hot, Bob), electric cars, and cleaner energy sources? (Hundreds of which have patents, bought and controlled by GE, Monsanto, Firestone, Ford, years ago.) Following this comes my biggest rift with Bob, who states, "Economic justice is a euphemism for *control of the wealthy....*" (his emphasis) "a preponderance of evidence seems to show that free-market (capitalist) nations have the cleanest and healthiest environments in the world." Hmm. It's not until Coors was faced with deep litigation to clean up the Rockies did they even admit to any wrongdoing. Could it be that America's cleaner than it was ten years ago because it cleared out thousands of factories and shifted them all across the globe to countries that don't have any environmental controls? Bob's a believer in unchecked capitalism. I'm not. If a company can take your money and poison land without reparation, they will. That's where we'll continue to debate, but, as I said, the dude makes me think. Two bucks could be spent a lot worse ways. —Todd (Evil Bob, 3596 Pine St., North Bend, OR 97459)



Static (from the Attic) Vol 1: Episodes 1-4: VHS, 2 hrs.

First off, *Static* is a terrible name for this program; I don't think the frantic goings-on stop for more than about a half second at a time. Even the camera is rarely immobile, which leads me to my only major complaint: the hand-held nature of the videography gives me nausea right around the cooking segment (which is unfortunate because I really would like to try my hand at making

Barbecued Gluten Globbs) and I have to take a break before I can watch the rest. That shouldn't be a problem for most viewers, though, so you'll be able to sit back and enjoy features covering the political (a Pensacola anarchist collective, Food Not Bombs), the recreational (train hopping, picture taking, dog abuse) and the mundaneness of day-to-day life (jobs, cooking, clandestine pets, moving) from the perspective of a vegan twen-

ty-something and his girlfriend. The soundtrack is excellent and bounces deftly from punk to country to techno appropriately and the editing shows some reasonable knowledge of working with video. Overall, a very well put-together, entertaining and informative video and a real fuckin' deal for seven bucks. —Cuss Baxter (Rex, PO Box 30785, Seattle, WA 98103; <www.staticvideo.com>)



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Blondie, From Punk to the Present: A Pictorial History

compiled by Allan Metz, 512 pages

Anyone who knows who Deborah Harry is knows what she did for kicking in the door for rock bands that included female members — she was one of the first. This book takes a wide-open look at Blondie's career — from her very early beginnings amongst her musical peers, who were also seedlings in the ready-bust-out-underground scene in the '70s NYC scene — to getting the band Blondie up and going, to breaking up, going solo, and reuniting these days once again. It's all here. And it's not so much a bibliography, but more an extensive collection of interviews, essays, and selected Deborah-related reminiscences from music artists (being of their own bands or the ones performing for years with Blondie). But what's somewhat neat about this book is that it covers a lot of what was influencing and happening all around the band during its formative years, giving the reader a feeling what was really going on back then. Lots and lots of photos throughout this 500+ page monster, including photos from NYC punk's past shutterbugs Bob Gruen, Stephanie Chernikowski, and Roberta Bayley (who shot that now-priceless roll of film containing the pic for the Ramones' first LP), and other photographers. I knew for quite some time that Debbie and Joey Ramone were really good pals from the early days of making their up-and-coming rounds at the clubs 'til Joey passed away in April of 2001. Some people even suggested that Joey and Debbie were romantically involved and my friends and I back in high school always joked about that. We figured if *were* to be true and they *were* eventually to get married, then that would then make Debbie's legal name Deborah Harry-Hyman, 'cause Joey's real name was Jeffrey Hyman. It's gynecologist humor. Go pick up this book and lighten the fuck up. —Designated Dale (Musical Legacy Publications, 2071 East Bennett St., Apt. D-11, RAZORCAKE 100 Springfield, MO 65804)

Coloring Outside the Lines: A Punk Rock Memoir

by Aimee Cooper, 132 pgs.

It's not often that you'll come across a Los Angeles-based, eighteen-month-long slice of punk rock life, circa '80-'81, that is exceedingly nice and a breeze to read. And I don't mean "nice" in a bad way. Aimee was a self-proclaimed, pixie-framed, happy punk rocker who didn't obsess over clothes and never let punk rock "stars" eclipse her real friendships in her loose-knit punk family, The Connected. Aimee avoids gigantic pitfalls that several authors have tripped into when recounting "back in the day." She worked at *Slash Magazine* — one of L.A.'s ground zeros for chronicling punk rock that was happening in California — as an unpaid receptionist. Although she was embroiled in the end of the first wave and the beginning of the second wave of L.A. punk, she does a great job of not sounding cynical. Actually, it's the exact opposite. There's no "you owe me, bow down" scenerio of yore cashing in on their punk chips in the vague hopes of literary validation feel to this book. Nor does Aimee adopt the "You'll never know. It was better and different back then" tone of hangers-on who haven't had anything relevant to input for the past fifteen to twenty years. What pervades this memoir is a sense of awe, preciousness, and self-awareness. It's less a dropping of names (although there are plenty of notables) than an earnest, easy-to-read recounting of a truly transitional time and place for a lady whose life was positively changed by punk music. It's neat reading about the egging of Adam Ant during a parking lot appearance, to watching Johnny Thunders watch her play with a cat, to calling in reinforcements to avoid a fight in a hospital waiting room, to her inability to get a cool nickname. Plus, as I mentioned, Aimee just sounds really fuckin' nice, like you'd like to just sit down with her and talk for several hours. She has a way of presenting life lessons in an extremely conversational manner.

Some of my favorite excerpts deal with humanity as it falls through the cracks when "serious" punk rockers are so busy documenting a scene and pruning their own careers to see beyond the tangle of their enormous egos. A fellow punk of Aimee's — a friend of a friend — had been shot and killed in what looked like one of the first instances of a drive-by shooting of a punk for just how he dressed. Aimee was distressed, and since she worked at *Slash*, asked a more knowledgeable co-worker what to do. She was given a phone number, which she called, unaware that it was to a "rival" paper, the *LA Weekly*. She told them of the shooting. Aimee was then summarily approached and dressed down by *Slash* owner, Bob Biggs. It seems that Biggs wasn't in the least concerned with the poaching of a punk on a street corner in a random act of violence, but more about the negative publicity surrounding L.A. punk rock in the following weeks. It just so happened that his wife, Penelope Spheris, had a movie debuting shortly thereafter: *The Decline of Western Civilization*. (Penelope would weather the storm and make such classic punk hits as the remakes of both the *Little*

Rascals and *The Beverly Hillbillies*.)

It's also refreshing that Aimee leaves the badass, tough-as-nails bravado associated with reminiscence and "punk fiction" in the back seat. When she gets arrested and detained for trying to hitch hike back home, she avoids boredom in an unconventional manner: "I then took hold of the vertical stand supporting the bunk beds, and did what any incarcerated prisoner would do in my situation. I did my ballet exercises. One and two and three — *pilé*." I think it's rad that Aimee makes no claims to be the end-all, be-all punk rocker and that she often resorts back to life prior to discovering punk rock to put the book into a greater perspective.

I have only small quibbles with the book. There are many points where I wish Aimee would take the time to explain the situation a little bit more in depth — such as the riot scenes — in an attempt to resonate this book's reach beyond Los Angeles or perhaps get a feel of why the cops took such an interest in suppressing punk rock at the time. Similarly, many of the chapters seem too short, that they are the skeleton keys to a much longer work that would put more flesh in the folds of her stories. However, these wants are small in comparison to how enjoyable the book is a whole. All in all, I highly recommend this enjoyable DIY effort. —Todd (Rowdy's Press, PO Box 847, Elgin, TX 78621. It's available from Interpunk for \$11.25)

Connemara Moonshine,

by Mark Gibbons, 136 pgs.

I normally try to stay away from books of poetry. There's generally something so self-indulgent about it; and it's often so vague or personal that it's impossible to break through the barriers and actually understand anything about the poem. So I was hesitant about reading *Connemara Moonshine*. I started reading it only because it came well-recommended by two different friends of mine, and I respect both of their tastes in books. And, when you get right down to it, I like poetry when it's done well. Just because it's done well so infrequently doesn't mean that I should give up on the whole art form.

So I started to read *Connemara Moonshine* with the sense that it better be fucking great or I was gonna stop reading after two poems. I read the whole book. I've read half of the poems two or three times. I have to give Gibbons credit. His poems are unique and fun to read. In a sense, Gibbons is a very masculine poet. His brevity is due less to his desire to have you pause and admire his pretty phrases and is due more to his quiet, wise way of talking. His says what he needs to say—he makes you understand—and he says no more. And it works. Most of the poems in *Connemara Moonshine* are anecdotes about life in Montana. They're full of the depth and beauty of the Montana wilderness. They tell stories about Gibbons working for a moving company, or sneaking into his big sister's room to listen to her forty-fives, or his big brother picking on him when they bury their childhood dog, or hanging out at his friend's outdoor wedding reception, watching an owl attack and eat a gopher. Through these

poems, we get to visit Gibbons tough-ass Aunt Ernie and hang out with old-timers who say and do wise things. They don't teach us lessons so much as they give us different eyes through which to look at the world. Reading through these poems, I not only got a sense of how Gibbons sees the world, but also how he came to see the world that way, who his influences are, what he's seen, what he's done. It's an impressive collection.

It's also a strange collection to review in *Razorcake* because it's got nothing to do with punk rock. In fact, from the few allusions to music that Gibbons makes, I can tell that he and I would have to ride in the truck with the radio turned off. Still, I've also heard that Gibbons is a DIY kinda guy. According to the guys who passed this book on to me, Gibbons made a name for himself by self-publishing his poems in chapbooks and doing readings, selling his stuff to independent bookstores, and basically travelling around Montana, spreading his words. On top of that, *Connemara Moonshine* is the first book from a promising independent book publisher out of Seattle, Camphorweed Press. So, yeah, again, I do try to stay away from poetry, but *Connemara Moonshine* really opened my eyes, reaffirmed some faith in the art form for me, and was a damn good read. —Sean Carswell (Camphorweed Press, PO Box 2326, Seattle, WA 98111)

**Critical Mass:
Bicycling's Defiant Celebration**
edited by Chris Carlson, 256 pgs.

Let me start by explaining something about criticism. When something is important to you, and you know much and care even more about it, you have a lot more to point out when something refers to it than if it is something you know little about. For an example, one friend who is only into punk and hardcore thought that *24 Hour Party People* was a decent film about the Manchester music scene, whereas my roommate who liked all the bands involved picked it apart for three hours after viewing it. One also finds more to pick apart in a good, complex argument. When I was in art school, teachers ripped apart an amazingly talented guy named Chris for details such as having too much brown in his paintings, while they glossed over lesser artists with "that's nice." It is easier to point out the flaws in something good than something bad.

That said, this is a good book, I dare say an important book. But it is not the book it could have been, nor the book I would have liked it to be. With any anarchist — or, to shy away from a loaded term — or hierarchical group or movement, those who organize, create, or edit something that attempts to showcase the group try not to do too much talking on behalf of anyone but themselves. Thereby, it is clear Chris isn't *writing* a book — he is *editing* one. I, for one, think I would have liked to see him write more. This reviewer has ridden in a few critical masses in a few cities, so I am a bit immersed in the culture discussed, but it seems to me that someone less familiar first hand might appreciate a bit more in an introduction. As it is, much of the content was culled from existing material — articles, editorials, essays, flyers given out at actual masses, CM online group posts — all originally published in a certain context. It makes me wonder who this book is for; much of it references topics that critical mass riders are well-versed in, and I am not sure if it is an introduction so much as an

unguided immersion for a novice.

Another issue with the disjointed collection of articles is that many of them are written by people who never expected to have their articles run side by side with other articles. The same points are made again and again. This may shock the reader to hear, but those of us who ride bikes consider ourselves to be smarter, healthier, happier and more environmentally friendly than those who drive cars (as if these are mutually exclusive — although the book is very pro-Nike as opposed to anti-car) and boy, do we ever like to tell people about it!


I think my biggest problem with this book is the focus on San Francisco. By no means is it exclusively about San Fran's mass. It refers to masses all over the country and in several other major cities throughout the world. And indeed, San Fran is the home of one of the most amazing monthly bike rides. But it seems to walk the fence between wanting to be about Critical Mass as a concept, which would discuss 'Frisco a bit more than any other city, and wanting to be solely about San Fran. Perhaps a book that almost exclusively was about one city could have plunged into greater detail and be more focused, allowing the reader to see one city as an example of what another could do, instead this comes across as a San Francisco-oriented book that is mindful that maybe it should have representation of others. It reminds me of how my high school yearbook committee had lots of pictures of their friends, but not so many that anyone complained about it.

Anyway, if you want to hunt me down and buy me a beer, I can complain about this book more, but all nitpicking aside, this is a good book all in all. It's one of those weird books that can be enjoyed as it is by bike punks, activists and people who just like bikes; a gift to those who love but are confused by the aforementioned; and likely will wind up required reading in college classes with "far-out" professors. —Rich Mackin (AK Press, 674 A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612-1163)


Get Your War On,
by David Rees, about 11 pgs. of *Voltron*-themed comics, about 89 non.

Two days after the US started bombing Afghanistan, David Rees began posting his comics on the web. There's two main characters and about ten other characters who pop in and out (one being fucking VOLTRON!!!) The whole idea is going-on commentary about the situation going on in Afghanistan, and American foreign policy in general. Not your cup of tea, you say? Too political? You like some funny with your cartoons? Here you go, bucko! I don't know how many times this has been quoted around *Razorcake* HQ by Sean, Todd, and myself. Even as I started writing this, I ended up reading a good fifteen pages (there's only one strip per page, usually about three panels) out loud to Todd, both of us laughing our asses off. Here's a little taste: "...it turns the relief effort into a fun game for the Afghan people — a game called 'See if you have any fucking arms left to eat the food we dropped after you step on a landmine trying to retrieve it!'" C'mon, you gotta chuckle. This one keeps me in stitches — Woman: "Say, did you hear about the 'Killing-and Torture- and Raping- Spree Party' that Exxon Mobil is hosting in Indonesia? It's rape-a-rific!" Man: "Aaarghh! And here I am stuck at my office's stupid summer pot luck! It's torture

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
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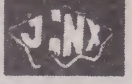
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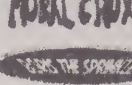
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I tell you! Well, OK, not *actual* torture — at least, not like getting tortured, and then raped, and then killed. But the potato salad *does* seriously suck." As of December, Soft Skull Press was out of stock and I finally tracked down a copy after about seven stores had sold out. It's worth the effort. Without a doubt, funny, funny stuff here. Super-highly recommended. —Megan Pants (Soft Skull Press, 71 Bond St., Brooklyn, NY 11217)

Guinea Pig Zero,
edited by Robert Helms, 245 pgs.

Guinea Pig Zero really took me by surprise. It's a collection of essays and stories about human research subjects, and it covers their experiences selling themselves for medical research studies. Generally, when you think of someone selling himself to science, you think of guys spending two hours in a plasma clinic so they can earn fifteen bucks to get drunk on, or something like that. Editor Robert Helms does everything he can to dispel that stereotype. He writes a series of essays that detail his own experience as a human guinea pig, and in his essays, he comes across as an articulate, thoughtful guy who's basically selling his meat both so that he won't have to work a full time job and so that he can help doctors heal people.

The book begins with a series of "report cards," in which he evaluates different research facilities, and how well they treat their guinea pigs. It's a strange way to start the book because most readers may feel like, if they have no intention of becoming a guinea pig themselves, the report cards will do them no good. Actually, the report cards paint a vivid picture of the inside life of a guinea pig. You get to understand what

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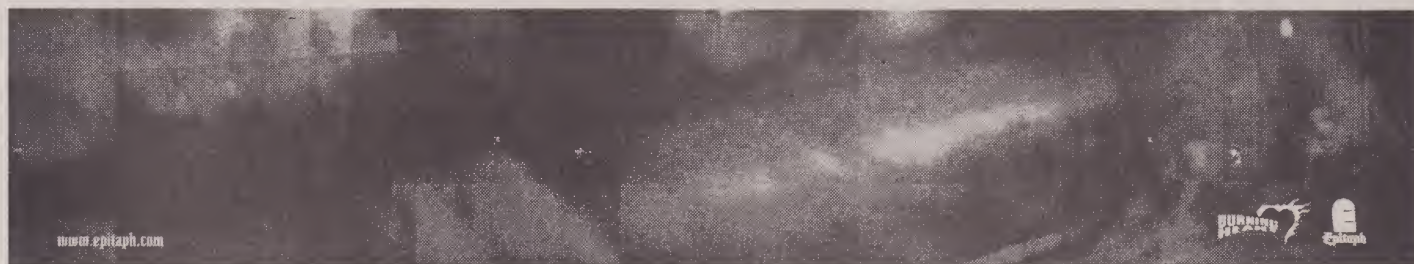


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they do and how they do it, what the ups and downs of this way of life are. From there, the book moves on to several different stories from the inside of research units. All of these stories aren't written by Helms. He gets help from various contributors, who also tend to come across as articulate and thoughtful. Even so, I found myself looking forward most to Helms's stories — mostly because he initially establishes the tone and the feel of the book, and other stories tend to deviate from that. Regardless, these stories from the inside make up the first third of the book.

From there, Helms moves on to discussing guinea pigs in history. He writes an excellent essay on Guernica and how different battles in World War II were little more than deadly warfare experiments on human subjects. He also writes an incredibly interesting essay about a man named Alexis St. Martin, a nineteenth century fur trapper who was accidentally shot. Following the shooting, a nearby doctor saved St. Martin's life, but wasn't able to sew up a small part of St. Martin's stomach. The doctor remedied this stomach hole by essentially putting a cork in it, then continuing to use the hole in St. Martin's stomach to perform experiments on his digestive system. After some time, it became clear that the stomach hole could be sewn up, but the doctor chose not to heal St. Martin, and instead used him as a lifelong guinea pig. And the histories continue. There's an excellent essay by a woman named Beth Lavoie on how the US military used US soldiers as guinea pigs in the Gulf War, essentially injecting them with a variety of toxins that later led to Gulf War Syndrome. There's also a sad but well written essay by a man named Paul Gelsinger, in which Gelsinger tells the story of how his son's life was taken by negligent research doctors. The book wraps up with some fiction and poetry by and about guinea pigs. The best part of this section is a creative non-fiction piece by Helms in which he discusses his time hanging out with lepers in India.

On the whole, *Guinea Pig Zero* does go a long way to dispel the stereotypes about human research subjects. It gives insight into a world that I otherwise would know little about. And, though the various essays in this book tackle some pretty heavy subjects, the writers maintain a down-to-earth tone. They really go out of their way to explain the things that a stranger to the world of medical studies wouldn't understand or know about. They tend to write in a very simple matter, but discuss things that are anything but simple. I really recommend this book. —Sean Carswell (Garrett County Press, 828 Royal St. #248, New Orleans, LA 70116)

Jumping the Line: the Adventures and Misadventures of an American Radical by William Herrick, 279 pages.

I was really interested in this book before actually starting to read it. Then I started and it took me forever to get into it. It's a memoir, a genre I always have a hard time getting into. I kept reading since I'd promised to review it and then WHAM! I was hooked. Not only was I reading it all of the time, but if I didn't happen to have it in my hands at that moment, I was usually talking about it. What it comes down to is that William Herrick just has a pretty amazing story to tell.

He was born a Jewish communist in Trenton, New Jersey in 1915. He was versed in Party politics from infancy, so much that he was

handing out leaflets at Trenton's largest factory, yelling, "Long live the Revolution!" by age eight. Herrick's family moved into the Communist Coop in New York after his father's death, where he went to meetings, jumped into picket lines (not always even knowing the reason for the picket) and befriended Natie, who strongly influenced his views for most of Herrick's life.

Together, Natie and Herrick see tensions between the Party and other groups in the neighborhood: the Lovestoneites, Yiddishists, and Socialists for starts. Natie's parents were Lovestoneites, along with the rest of the party, but when Stalin demanded that Browder be seen as the new leader, Lovestone's followers were ostracized. Natie should've become William's nemesis, but they remained close friends and were constantly arguing over the other's position on various political topics. William held the "Because the Party says so" attitude whereas Natie used events and outcomes to prove that the Party wasn't always right or doing what they promised. Here began William's doubt in the Party.

He continues his life following the Party line, but also pursuing his own path. Spending time with his father's anarchist sister, Tante Golda, and her family led to him moving to Michigan at the height of the Great Depression to live and work on Sunrise Farm, a commune founded by anarchists. Spending time with them also led to him fondly remembering sitting on Emma Goldman's lap in New Jersey, during the time when she was supposedly in Canada, not being allowed back in the States after her deportation.

It doesn't take long to see that Sunrise Farm is a far cry from Utopia. Many families from varying social beliefs moved to the farm as a last hope after businesses were closing around them at home due to the Depression. Everyone has different opinions on how the farm should be run, who is doing the most work, or who is sleeping with whom. Tensions flare and William decides to leave the farm and hops trains across the county before returning to the farm for the next harvest.

Eventually, he settles back in New York, which leads him back to the Party and to his involvement in the Spanish Civil War as part of the Lincoln Battalion. In Spain he finds more fallacies between Party policy and promise and actual actions taken and enforced. He becomes aware of blatant Party lies against other members of the rebellion against the fascists. He becomes interested in how other parties, predominantly the POUM (the Workers Party of Marxist Unification), view the war. He becomes increasingly uneasy with the Party as his battalion is constantly compared to the American forces of 1917 who saved Spain from the "Huns." (Lenin had been extremely vocal in his opposition of the imperialist war.)

He returns to America with a bullet still lodged in his neck against his spinal cord and lots of unanswered questions. The Party is covering his medical costs and he has a job with the Fur Traders Union. He becomes a posterboy of dedication until he loses his job when his anti-Stalin views are brought to light. In response, he falls into the same form of protest he aided the Party in for most of his life. He "jumps the line" and pickets.

Herrick doesn't leave many details out in the interest of maintaining the truth rather than

upholding an image — his or otherwise. He writes of the fondness he had for sitting on certain women's laps. One of those laps belonged to Emma Goldman, who was supposedly no longer allowed in the U.S. since her deportation. Herrick shows a side of Cole Porter that I'd never heard of. (That of a pectoral-pinching old man.) Herrick works with black share croppers in the South, attempting to get them to unionize. The FBI call on him three times to testify during the McCarthy-driven Red Scare. He works for a man who he considers to be both a four-year old and a genius, Orson Welles.

On the whole, this is an extremely well-written and engaging book. What saves this from being solely a book about someone searching for his own beliefs in life is the stories that he has to tell along the way. It's always interesting to see history as it only can be seen, through one person's eyes at a time. His commitment to detail in his storytelling has left me with the desire to seek out his novels for more of the same. —Megan Pants (AK Press, 674 A 23rd St., Oakland, CA 94612-1163)

Orgasms of History: 3000 Years of Spontaneous Insurrection by Yves Fremian, Drawings by Valny, 248 pgs.

The back cover of *Orgasms of History* says, "Every now and then, they explode. Riots, uprisings, revolutions, new and bizarre social groups spring up seemingly from nowhere. Our standard histories tend to treat these as oddities, if treated at all, or as misguided responses to hard times, limited by lack of responsible leadership. Here's an illustrated people's history to puncture that balloon." French writer Yves Fremian presents over twenty-five rebellions, revolts, and nontraditional philosophers. From the Greek cynics to the San Francisco Diggers, Fremian gives a few pages to each. He attempts to connect them all with a general anarchist outlook. He makes statements like, "Between feudalism and bureaucracy, between capitalism and private western imperialism and the State capitalism and imperialism of the 'socialist' countries, there are few, if any, essential differences." Most historians, and myself, disagree. Although there are certainly some broad statements that could be made, such as "Power corrupts," that are relatively true throughout history, there is a huge difference between feudalism and capitalism. The demands of English peasants in the thirteenth century are not identical with those of the American working class in the 19th century.

Unfortunately, Fremian seems intent on over-simplifying. He ignores a lot of negative aspects to the rebellions he writes about and calls a number of events and people "anarchist" before the term was commonly used. Fremian does pick some interesting events and history. A novice might want to pick this up to get some ideas about historical events he or she might want to read more about. Of course, it is clearly not Fremian's intent to provide a comprehensive history. And he does do a pretty good job of delivering the basics. In the introduction, he says, "A book is no substitute for a gun." I guess us non-gun-toting revolutionaries are screwed. Oh well. —Maddy (AK Press, PO Box 40682, SF, CA 9410-0682)

You Can't Win by Jack Black, 279 pgs.

No, it's not an autobiography of the chubby dude with shaggy hair in the **RAZORCAKE** 103

movies. *You Can't Win* is neck-and-neck with *Boxcar Bertha* (see last issue), in fact, reading them in tandem gives the reader an extremely lucid view of the turn of the century in America from the bottom of the barrel, this book from the perspective of a lifetime thief. In its time, this book was a best seller, going through five printings in the 1920s, and much like Nelson Algren's *Walk on the Wild Side* that was wildly successful and in turn virtually forgotten decades later, there's a real humanity and a concerned depth of character to the people in the story. Jack Black's no one "important" — he isn't the owner of a railroad, a doctor, a senator, or a general — but his story, of coming from a broken home, being "raised" by his father, and his slow, meandering lifelong induction and involvement in both the hobo and yegg (criminal) lifestyles, is tinged with timeless qualities that make the book extremely relevant and topical, especially today. When I read this book, I couldn't help but think of folks like Howard Zinn and Studs Turkel — historians who understand the importance of letting the "little" people speak in their own voices and air their concerns.

You Can't Win is a great look at the inside of a loose criminal organization and a close examination of one professional thief's code of ethics that conscientiously isn't full of hyperbole. The book reads in a very even tone, which is surprising since it's rich in experiences that could easily be morphed into a movie with lots of explosions and intrigue. Thankfully, it reads honestly. There's no doubt that Jack did wrong things — like stealing a (fake) ruby, breaking open a copious number of safes, and often

creeping into people's rooms (once a champion boxer) at night when they slept. He self-admits that, but he did these illegal actions in a way that was consistent for him, a man who became incapable of taking a straight job. Ethics? Can a thief have ethics? Yes. Jack explains: "The thief who goes out and steals money to pay back room rent rather than swindling his poor landlady has character. The one who runs away without paying her has no character."

For this review, I'm going to hold Jack Black to a higher standard than what's clogging up the book charts. Instead, I'll consult a higher source — the Dwarves' classic album: *Blood, Guts, and Pussy*. Let's take a look

Blood: There's a lot of blood. Lots of folks get shot and killed. Occasional chunks of skull fly from close-range shotgun blasts. In one instance, a fellow train hopper and Jack get into a boxcar filled with lumber. When the train hit a downgrade, the lumber shifted: "The boy had died instantly. His body, from the waist up, was flattened between the lumber and the front end of the car." Jack was imprisoned from above by the lumber, and cut his way out of the boxcar with a pocketknife. This is much more engaging than reading about people stuck in cubicles, having conversations in a mall, or complaining that there's a downside to fame.

Guts: There's no question that Jack was brave, but later on in life, his digressions against the state began accumulating and he had to suffer longer prison sentences and severe beatings. Roughly, the last third of the book is a look into the prison system (which hasn't changed all that much in eighty years, truth be told) and details a whipping when he's tied and

stretched up on a tripod and beaten with a leather strap: "The first blow was like a bolt of lightning; it shocked and burned."

Pussy: I have to credit co-Razorcake dude Sean for bringing this up. This book is, oddly, virtually devoid of sex. Sure, there are prostitutes lurking about, but not once — to my recollection — does Jack size up a woman, invite a woman to spend an evening with him, nor comment on a woman's shape. I even thought about the possibility that Jack was gay, but, being in prison, he would have ample time to pursue male tail in the joint. First-hand sex never reaches these pages. I'm still wondering why. Was Jack asexual or was it a publishing decision not to go against the mores of the times? So, in place of pussy, Jack Black delivers with drugs, which he slowly became addicted to. He claims "I discovered that the finest quality of morphine may be obtained from lettuce and proved it in the prison garden by extracting it and eating it." This, I did not know.

All in all, if I were to become the Czar of Reading and there were required texts you had to read before being let out into society at large, *You Can't Win* would definitely be in the top hundred. Not only is it well-written and easy to read, it's got the weight of a man's heart in it and the power of eighty years lapsing to show that history may have happened in the past, and there's a lot to learn from it, but due to the themes that Jack presses that haven't been resolved, history sure as hell isn't over. —Todd (AK Press, PO Box 40682, SF, CA 9410-0682)



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They're already a hit in Sweden and Vegas.

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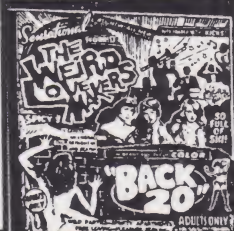
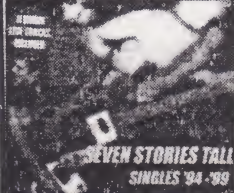
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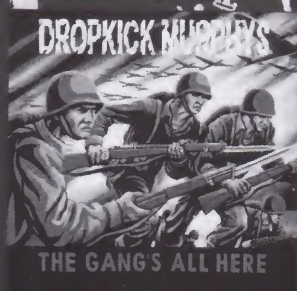
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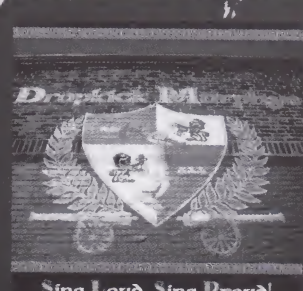
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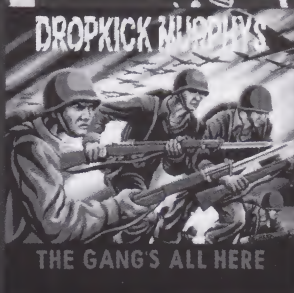
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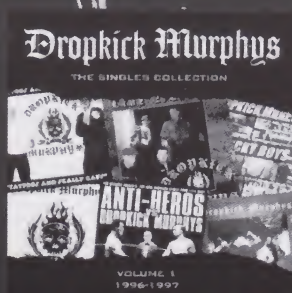
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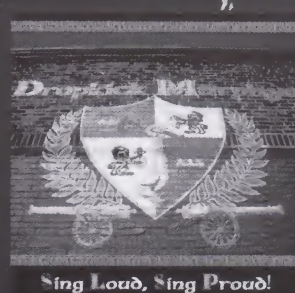
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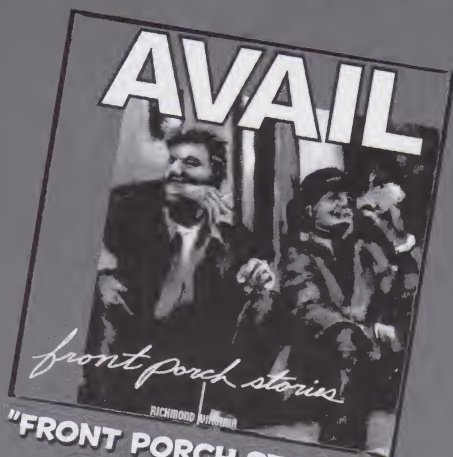
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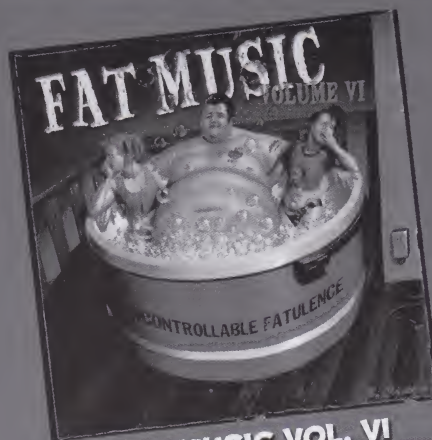
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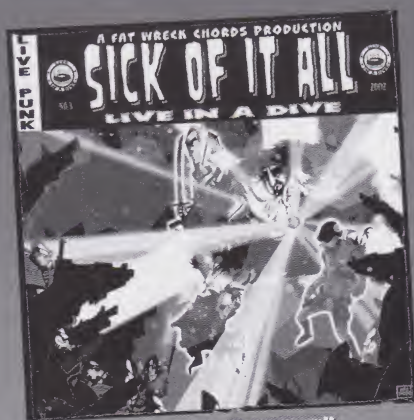
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